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Canada C 1.00	Malaysia M 1.50	Slovenia S 1.70
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Denmark D 1.50	Poland P 2.50	Sweden S 1.50
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The Playboy and the mystery vendetta

Who's got it in for Taki?

G2 with European weather



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Out of the blue find excites mineral world

Tim Radford
Science Editor

A MYSTERIOUS mineral with a remarkable pattern of colour that baffles scientists was announced by the Natural History Museum yesterday.

The news — on the first full day of SFT96, informally called national science week — came a year after the stone was first examined at the Natural History Museum in London during a radio show to mark last year's national week of science, engineering and technology.

Under a microscope and exposed to polarising filter, the stone changes from colourless to bright blue to lurid purple. Under a more powerful electron microscope, it is revealed to be made up of millions of sub-microscopic crystal fibres.

The discoverer was the broadcaster and geologist, Anna Grayson. Yesterday she was stonewalling attempts to link the mineral with the fictional kryptonite, the stuff that unmanned Superman.

"It could be dangerous in powder form because it is very similar to asbestos, but in lump form it is as safe as houses," she said.

It was while she was presenting a kind of minerals roadshow, broadcast from the museum, that she discovered she was keeper of a mystery. "They said 'bring bits in' and as I left that morning I swept a couple of pieces into my handbag including a sample of this mineral, and we discovered it was new."

She first came by the material in romantic fashion. She had met Des Clark, a geomorphologist, who invited her back to his place to view his mineral collection. "He stored it in a cardboard box under his bed and it was full of wonderful things, mainly copper and lead minerals, and there



Anna Grayson and the mystery mineral 'swapped for a pencil with an Arab boy in north Africa' PHOTOGRAPH: GRHAMMA TURNER

was this very small fragment of blue mineral, which he said he had swapped for a pencil or something with an Arab boy when he was doing his PhD in north Africa."

Miss Grayson subsequently married Mr Clark and they went to Morocco on a field trip. To her astonishment, she came across

another chunk of the same mysterious blue mineral on a stall.

It seemed to her a kind of serendipity, from the deep, "a chunk of ocean floor thrust up, squashed about with lots of water percolating through it. I had assumed it was a copper mineral, because of the colour."

So far the stone has revealed silicon, aluminium, calcium, magnesium, iron and oxygen. Dr Cressey has described it as "the most strikingly blue mineral ever discovered". Full investigation could go on for years. Each crystal fibre is a 10,000th of a millimetre across, and the make-up of the stone chal-

lenges scanning electron microscope and X-ray diffraction devices alike.

Worldwide, about 40 new minerals turn up each year. They are usually too small to be seen with the naked eye, and are already included in other rocks. A lump of something entirely new and big enough to slip into a pocket is very rare.

New fears on design of reactors

Simon Beavis
and Paul Brown

A FULL-SCALE safety investigation has been launched at two of Britain's most modern nuclear power stations after an emergency shutdown during refuelling raised fears of an inherent design fault.

The incident occurred at Heysham 2 power station in Lancashire on January 28 when a seven tonne fuel rod became stuck in the reactor core during refuelling.

A second attempt to lower the fuel assembly into a refuelling channel failed and safety devices automatically shut down the reactor for a second time.

Preliminary investigations found that the fuel channel through which the rod was being lowered had become distorted so that a casing at the top of the fuel assembly jammed.

Government safety inspectors widened the new safety procedures to Torness, an advanced gas-cooled reactor of the same design in Scotland, until the precise cause of the incident has been established.

Critical to the safety of reactors is the ability to raise and lower the 70ft-long fuel assemblies. If a rod becomes stuck in the core and coolant is unable to circulate, the fuel can overheat uncontrollably. If the rod breaks, it can fall to the reactor floor and cause a "melt-down".

Describing the incident, the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate said the station remained out of action for 8 days and was only allowed to re-start on condition that its operators, Nuclear Electric, did not refuel it unless the reactor was completely shut down.

"The NII has not had to use



chines. One source said: "There is a fear that heavy running of the AGRs is causing distortion in more than one station."

If the problem cannot be corrected and the industry is forced to shut down the reactors for refuelling, the economic viability of the industry will be threatened.

After a poor start in life, AGR stations have recently recorded huge increases in output to bring the industry to the brink of profitability. But plans to further increase output will depend crucially on refuelling the stations while they are still generating power.

Details of the incident at Heysham, one of seven advanced gas-cooled reactors being lined up for privatisation, has so far been kept secret.

But the scale of the investigation being carried out by Nuclear Electric in conjunction with Scottish Nuclear indicates the safety and economic viability of the two companies as they approach their sell-off.

The fuelling process was taking place at Heysham regularly with 230 fuel channels needing to be recharged every two weeks. Of the seven AGRs being lined up for privatisation this summer only four have been allowed on-load refuelling. Hinkley Point B in Somerset and Hunterston B in Ayrshire, Scotland are still being permitted to use the technique because they differ in design. The three others, Dungeness in Kent, Heysham 1, and Hartlepool in Cleveland have never been given clearance.

Mandela tells divorce trial of loveless marriage

'Since I came back from jail, Not once has the defendant entered the bedroom whilst I was awake... I was the loneliest man'



Winnie Mandela... wept when shown love letter



Nelson Mandela... set against reconciliation

David Beresford
in Johannesburg

THE public humiliation of Nelson Mandela at the hands of his wife, Winnie, was taken yet further yesterday when South Africa's head of state was forced to take the witness stand and testify about bedroom secrets, saying: "I was the loneliest man..."

The long-festering relationship between one of the world's most famous married couples erupted into a courtroom battle as Mrs Mandela staged a rearguard action to prevent the ANC leader from divorcing her.

President Mandela testified to the Johannesburg supreme court how he discovered that his wife was having an affair when he was given a love let-

ter she had written to a young lawyer, and how she had broken down and wept when she was confronted with it.

"My lord, if the entire universe tried to persuade me to reconcile with the defendant [Mrs Mandela] I would not," he told the court, insisting that the relationship had broken down irretrievably. "I am determined to get rid of this marriage."

Disclosing that they had not talked to each other "for years" except for the "exchange of pleasantries", he said that her avowals of affection for him at political rallies were "cosmetic and hypocritical".

Mrs Mandela's legal team presented an extraordinary defence to the action — insisting that, as a member of the royal house of the Tembu, the state president had to submit himself to tribal mediation to try to save the marriage.

She is claiming that the "slight tensions" in their relationship are due entirely to public allegations that she was responsible for the murder of the 14-year-old township activist, Stompie Sepele, and the killing of a Soweto physician, Dr Abubaker Asvat. She wanted tribal mediation to clear up this misunderstanding.

In papers before the court, she is demanding half of Mr Mandela's assets if the divorce goes through. The papers show that, on a reported monthly salary of only R16,000 (£2,700), Mrs Mandela is spending R107,000 (£18,500), including more than £1,700 on

clothing and £350 on cosmetics.

The South African president cut a frail figure yesterday when he appeared in the Rand supreme court in Johannesburg — the same courtroom in which his wife stood trial in 1991 in connection with the death of Stompie.

Dressed in a grey suit and watched closely by bodyguards he engaged in smiling banter with his own counsel, greeted his estranged wife politely and went on a miniwalkabout of the courtroom during an adjournment, shaking hands with the opposing legal team and assuring them he did not take umbrage at their representation of Mrs Mandela.

But in unguarded moments he appeared tired. It emerged that special arrangements had been made with the presiding judge, President of the Transvaal Mr Justice Eloff, for regular and short adjournments to enable him to leave the room. Mr Mandela is represented in the case by an Afrikaner silk, Wim Trengove, who is rated by many as the country's leading trial lawyer.

The hearing opened with an application by Mrs Mandela's counsel, Ishmael Semanya, for a two-week postponement of the hearing on the grounds that the president had failed to supply Mrs Mandela with details of his financial estate and to facilitate tribal mediation. In papers before the court Mr Mandela said he wanted the divorce expedited because he had a heavy schedule of state visits abroad and to minimise the embarrassment of publicity while he was entertaining foreign dignitaries.

Mr Semanya submitted an affidavit which he had just received by fax from Kaiser Matanzima — the former leader of the Transkei homeland whom he described as paramount chief of the Tembu, the Xhosa clan in which Mr Mandela has a position of minor royalty. This said that under customary law the divorce could not be allowed to proceed before mediation had been attempted by tribal elders. He said members of the royal house had tried to intervene, but Mr Mandela had refused

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Sketch

Safety in law of diminishing return



Matthew Engel

TWO politicians who have lately found themselves controversially mentioned in the public prints were able to return yesterday to the calm, safe and obscure haven of a Monday afternoon in the House of Commons.

barrister in the Matrix Churchill trial? Of course it can't, said Sir Nicholas, don't be absurd. (I paraphrase the orotund phraseology somewhat, but without losing the general sense.)

First night

Verdi upstaged by the Werther

Tom Sutcliffe

Rigoletto and Werther Theatre Royal, Brighton

THOUGH English Touring Opera's Rigoletto is the newcomer to the company's long spring tour, it is its Werther — much criticised when first seen last autumn — that is now the more accomplished and interesting of the two shows.

ing of this wonderful Verdi, by Richard Jones with David Parny conducting, will always remain a high spot in the history of the renamed company.

Subsidies to low paid cost taxpayer £2 billion a year

BENEFITS paid to people in work have more than doubled in three years to at least £2.3 billion, *writes David Bradie.*

employers to declare how many staff make most use of the benefits. A Department of Social Security spokesman said the average hourly pay rate of family credit recipients was about £3.50.

'Naive' owner admits 'mistake' in letting youngsters know where he stored weapons at his home

Alert on pensioner's guns



Peter Preston, a competition marksman and rifle club member, whose guns were stolen

Owen Bowcott

POLITICAL anxiety over gun control was heightened yesterday when it was alleged that a 14-year-old boy arrested in High Wycombe for stealing four rifles and pistols had previously handled the weapons at the home of a local pensioner.

Police were still looking for a .22 pistol last night. As Thames Valley police announced an inquiry into the incident, the Home Office confirmed that the frequency with which firearms owners must renew their permits has recently been relaxed from every three years to every five years.

Harvey Nichols in £80m flotation to fund new branches

'Sloanes' favourite store looks for new horizons in Yorkshire and catering trade

Richard Thomas

HARVEY Nichols, favourite high fashion haunt of London's Sloane set, is floating on the stock exchange to raise funds for a nationwide expansion programme, starting in Yorkshire.

of shares. The owner, Hong Kong-based Dickson Concepts, will retain the controlling stake. New branches are to open, beginning with Leeds this autumn, and there are plans to capitalise on the success of the fifth-floor restaurant in the Knightsbridge store by opening similar establishments elsewhere.

important new projects... and look to the future with confidence. Last year the store made a £5 million profit, after losing money during the recession.

but agreed the store's social cachet would fuel a healthy market among individuals in the near future. The patronage of the Princess of Wales is seen as an important marketing bonus.

born chef enjoying a £2 cup of coffee at the cafe. It is doubtful whether the Harvey Nicks ethos — epitomised by Edwina and Patsy in the BBC's Absolutely Fabulous — will sell in the North.

certain class of people here since we started in 1813," he said. "That's why they pay over the odds. I'm not sure if Yorkshire is ready."

Mandela's 'loveless marriage'

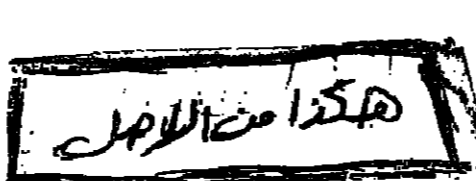
continued from page 1... to meet them and had failed to accord them "proper respect". Mr Trengove told the court Mr Matanzima was in fact only paramount chief of Western Transkei and it was "inappropriate" for him to "meddle" in the Mandela relationship.

"The contents of the letter, my lord, were incompatible with a marriage relationship and even if there was a possibility of reconciliation, it confirmed my decision never to reconcile with the defendant"

polygamist. In Tembu custom you normally have a customary marriage and one of the methods of observing them is for a man who wants to get married to waylay a girl as she goes to the river to fetch water and take her home.

Expressing "shock" at his wife's action in obtaining an affidavit from Chief Matanzima, President Mandela said: "Several times he wanted to visit me in jail and I refused, because I did not want to be tainted by his reputation."

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'We still despise each other. But we have found a common cause, and it's your money'

Caroline Sullivan with the Sex Pistols



Steve Jones, second from left, Paul Cook, centre, and John Lydon, right, belch, sneer and trade insults with the press yesterday PHOTOGRAPH SEAN SMITH

Gobfathers of punk hit the comeback trail

EIGHTEEN years after dissolving in a flurry of acrimony and saliva, the Sex Pistols are back. The band that started punk rock held a press conference yesterday at the 100 Club, central London, scene of their early gigs, to announce plans for a tour and live album this summer. When singer Johnny Rotten split up the band after their only American tour in 1978, it was a shame he could not have seen himself two decades hence. Given that nostalgia was grounds for death by gobbing during the punk era, he would have been horrified. Now 40, known by his real name of John Lydon and a member in good standing of the venerable Hills Cricket Club, he seems to have forgotten all that from the tone of part of the press conference. Lydon and former colleagues Steve Jones, Paul Cook and Glen Matlock could almost be any middle-aged band hitting the nostalgic comeback trail. No, they insisted, they are not being hypocritical by reforming after swearing they would never work together again. They have simply changed their minds. No, Lydon, Cook and Jones are not eating humble pie by patching things up with bassist Matlock, who was sacked early on for being a Beatles fan. It is simply that Matlock's replacement, Sid Vicious, is unavailable due to a 1979 heroin overdose. "His ashes got spilled into the air conditioning system at Heathrow - we'd need a Hoover," Lydon said belching. "We still hate [Matlock]." The conference was staged the flesh a few minutes later. Lydon has remained tonally true to the punk spirit, but his bleached, mangled hair was rudely shown up by the sleekness of his red and white leisure jacket. Conspicuous by his absence was charismatic former manager Malcolm McLaren, who has not been on speaking terms with the group since being sued over royalties 10 years ago. The four, who have worked on individual musical projects since the Pistols, seemed delighted to be able to trade insults with the press. Asked whether they still despised each other, Lydon crowed: "With a vengeance, but we've found a common cause, and it's your money." How much will they be earning from the 19-date European tour, which commences on June 21 in Finland (they play London, Glasgow, Belfast and Dublin on, respectively, June 23, July 16, 17 and 18)? "Don't be nosy," their booking agents, Solo, would not confirm. They had earned £2 million for the tour. Lydon also attacked the music of the last 20 years, saying nothing worthwhile had been produced, and the Sex Pistols were returning to spare us "all those trashy little pop stars you have got". But he admitted he was depressed about "all those geriatrics that'll turn up. I hope at Finsbury Park it rains and they all get their wheelchairs stuck in the mud." There will not be many rehearsals, he said. "There's no need. You know these songs as well as we do. I bet you play them better as well." Will the reunion be permanent? "It's highly likely we'll beat the crap out of each other in the first three seconds onstage," Lydon drawled, putting paid to the idea of pensioner Pistols. They have no new songs. It seems that, unlike John Lennon, Sid died without leaving any new demo tapes for the survivors to capitalise on.



The group in their heyday, with Sid Vicious third from left

managed in a way that would have been alien to the 1978 Pistols. Top music publicity firm Poole Edwards invited everyone from the NME to Hello!, the place was decked with Union Jacks, and transvestite waitresses served bacon rolls. The assembly was warmed up with a broadcast of the Pistols' expletive-laden 1976 appearance on Bill Grundy's Today show. How young they looked, telling Grundy he was an "old bastard". How fortyish they looked in

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Blunkett sanctions pupil opt-out

John Carvel Education Editor

ALIENATED 14-year-olds would be taken out of school to spend much of the week at a further education college or on the factory floor under controversial Labour proposals unveiled in the Guardian today by David Blunkett, the shadow education secretary. "It is time to recognise that young people who have become disaffected with their final years of compulsory education may get a better chance to make something of their lives if they are encouraged to take up vocational opportunities outside the traditional environment of the school," he says in an article in Guardian Education. Mr Blunkett's plan is intended to address mounting concern about tens of thousands of youngsters who leave school without gaining even a single GCSE qualification and who are ill-equipped for employment of any sort. Earlier this month Chris Woodhead, the chief inspector of schools, identified the under-achievement of white working-class boys as "one of the most disturbing problems within the whole education system". The Labour plan has been designed to escape some of the criticism from teacher unions and local authorities which greeted leaks of similar recommendations due to be published later this month by Sir Ron Dearing, the Government's chief curriculum adviser. Doug McAvoey, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said it would forcefully resist Sir Ron's plan for low-achieving pupils to be allowed to become "semi-detached" from school at 14 and pursue vocational courses at college. This amounted to tampering with the statutory minimum leaving age, he warned. According to Mr Blunkett's version of the scheme, underperforming pupils aged 14 and 15 would stay on the school roll but would spend much of their time studying at a local college or community centre. National Vocational Qualifications in practical job-related subjects. Last night, Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters' Union of Women Teachers, said the

scheme had been tried by the Inner London Education Authority in the 1970s. "One of the dangers is that it could be seen as a slack reference, labelling children who do not prosper at school and dumping them on further education colleges. We wish the colleges every success." Under a plan for education from 14 to 19 which Labour is due to publish later this week, all students would receive extensive work experience, but those who were "significantly disaffected with the school system should have the chance to study for their studies in further education colleges which work with local businesses". Mr Blunkett says: "We must make the compulsory leaving age at 16 a practical reality rather than a rule that is too often broken by persistent truancy."

'We must make the leaving age a reality rather than a rule often broken by persistent truancy'

He was impressed by an experiment at Glaisdale secondary school in Nottingham where all 14 and 15-year-old pupils were offered the chance to study for NVQs at local colleges of further education. David Higgins, the head teacher, said about half the 240 pupils in this age range took the vocational option, studying subjects such as engineering, bakery, hairdressing, business administration, art and design. The initiative improved motivation and cut truancy, but it was limited to Friday afternoons and was not targeted at under-achievers. "I stress that we do this in addition to the full range of GCSEs," he said. "This is not a selective programme. Any child can get 9 GCSEs as well as an NVQ." The pupils not going to an FE college on Friday afternoons could choose from an information technology course at the school, community service or outdoor pursuits, he said. John Major's alternative minister of education, 62 page 10.

Ex-Pistols' half-cocked careers

The superannuated rebels who swapped anarchy in the UK for holidays in the sun

JOHN Lydon has had the most successful post-Pistols career. The next vehicle for his rants was Public Image Ltd, which had 12 hit singles between 1976 and 1982. During that time, Lydon moved to New York and then Los Angeles, where he lives with his wife, Nora.

The former threat to civilisation now spends his days pottering between his home studio and the beach. Glen Matlock, after being dismissed from the band for being "a mummy's boy", formed a series of short-lived groups, including the Rich Kids and the Spectres.

He went to ground in west London, but a couple of years ago, wrote an autobiography, Was A Teenage Sex Pistol. Matlock is about to release a solo album on Oasis's label, Creation Records. Oasis are said to "revere" him. Steve Jones emigrated to Los Angeles in the early 1980s after a band he had formed with Paul Cook, the Professionals, failed to

trouble the charts. He cultivated a drug habit before cleaning up and forming a band, The Damned, with John Taylor formerly of Duran Duran. Paul Cook became a jobbing drummer. He is the Sex Pistol who has appeared most recently on Top of the Pops in 1994. He drummed for Edwyn Collins on the hit A Girl Like You.

Bank admits forecasting errors

City eyes rate cut as governor says he was 'too pessimistic'

Larry Elliott Economics Editor THE City was last night put on alert for a fresh cut in the cost of borrowing in the coming months after Eddie George, the Governor of the Bank of England, admitted that he had been wrong in his assessment of the economy. Speaking in Sweden, Mr George confessed that he had been "fairly consistently over-pessimistic" about the prospects for inflation and that it would damage the Bank's credibility if its caution was "substantially and

consistently overdone". Analysts said Mr George's comments reflected a marked softening of his stance following the bruising battle over interest rates with the Chancellor since May last year. They predicted that the Bank would again downgrade its forecasts for inflation in its next quarterly report, due out in May, and that this would be seized upon by Kenneth Clarke when the two men meet to discuss interest rates. Mr Clarke has consistently overruled Mr George's advice on monetary policy, and economists now see the door open for a fourth post-Budget

reduction in base rates to revive the economy. Although some analysts believe that the scope for further interest rate cuts is limited, the weakness of industry, the reluctance of consumers to spend and the unexpected rise in unemployment last month are putting pressure on the Chancellor to provide a further stimulus. Stephen Hannah, chief economist at Japanese firm IBI, said Mr George's comments should be seen as a "massaging of market views" on rates. He added that the governor was "getting market expectations to a place where they will accept another rate cut". Mr George used his lecture to the Stockholm School of Economics to deny that the Bank had an in-built deflationary bias, adding that it sought low inflation as a means to securing "sustained growth of activity and employment". The Bank has been stung by the criticism that its hawkish approach to inflation means that it is in favour of interest rates being higher than warranted by the state of the economy. Mr George said that in his policy advice to the Chancellor "we deliberately set out to avoid taking risks with the inflation target, seeking to err at the margin on the side of caution. "This we are obliged to do, in order to build up policy credibility against the background of the UK's unhappy track record. But we are talking here of a bias at the margin."

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This is Taki the Victim, a man who is on the run from the world, who is so paranoid about his security he carries a gun - unbeknown to his aristocratic hosts - to every society party he attends (except in London where he cannot acquire an arms license). He goes, in his own words, "armed to the teeth".

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Hundreds of millions of pounds of Class A drug imported as Customs success in seizures has led to big increase in 'wholesale' price

Heroin dealers target 'lucrative' UK

Weak controls at borders ease smugglers' task

Alan Travis
Home Affairs Editor

INTERNATIONAL traffickers have targeted Britain as a new market for heroin and are importing hundreds of millions of pounds of the Class A drug, Customs and Excise said yesterday.

The traffickers have become interested because heroin sold in the UK now sells at a higher "wholesale" price than the United States or any other European country.

"All the evidence, Customs seizures, police seizures and reports from those close to the users, points to a massive increase in the volume of heroin," said Dick Kellaway, Customs and Excise chief investigation officer, yesterday.

The amount of heroin seized by Customs last year rose by 80 per cent to more than 1.1 tonnes worth £115 million in street value.

"We believe the increase is supplier-led in the sense that heroin is being imported in order to create a market. Most of the heroin seized in 1995 was brought across

dealer level this becomes about £80 to £90 a gram with an individual two-hit paper "wrap" of heroin selling for about £10.

Much of the heroin is believed to come from Turkey and crosses several borders before it reaches the UK. Countries such as Romania, Bulgaria and the former Yugoslavia with very primitive drug detection systems are crucial links in the chain.

One further development is that Turkish traffickers are now developing links with gang networks in Liverpool, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Another factor in the drug seizure figures was the recovery outside of Scotland of significant amounts of the tranquilliser Termezepam for the first time.

Tony Newton, the Cabinet minister responsible for co-ordinating the anti-drug campaign said that there was cause for concern in the sharp rise in heroin and ecstasy seizures.

"Britain is now awash with drugs, but we have to recognise that reducing the supply of illegal substances ultimately depends on reducing the demand for them, especially among young people," he said.

The figures show that Customs seized a record 55.6 tonnes of drugs last year compared to 51 tonnes in 1994. A total of 2,323 people were arrested.

The combined amount of cannabis seized throughout the year was 52.5 tonnes, an 11.1 per cent increase, worth £173.4 million.

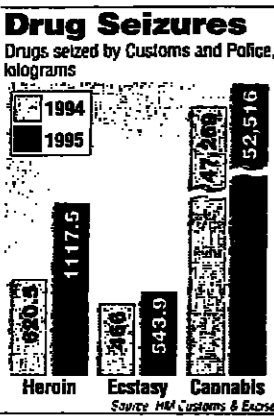
The amount of cocaine seized was 940.7 kgs, down 57.3 per cent, with a street value of £109.5 million. However customs pointed out that the 1994 figure was distorted by three particularly large seizures. Otherwise the 1995 figure would reflect a 125 per cent increase.

One in 10 full time jobs in Customs and Excise are to go overseas next three years as part of plans to remove another 12,000 posts in the Treasury, writes David Henck.

A total of 2,564 jobs will go reducing staff levels from 25,429 to 22,865, according to figures released by Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, outlining the Treasury's expenditure plans for the next three years.

The Inland Revenue is also to see a huge cut in staff from 55,300 this year to 49,590 by 1997. The 5,710 will fall almost entirely on full-time staff.

The Treasury which has already lost a third of its staff since 1990 is to lose another 215 jobs over the next three years. The Valuation Office, which sets house values for council tax purposes, will lose 1,125 jobs — dropping to 4,000 staff by 1999.



Europe from Turkey," said Mr Kellaway. "Several specially made concealments have been found deep inside commercial vehicles which have already crossed seven or eight national frontiers before reaching the UK."

Ministers and police shied away yesterday from predicting a "heroin epidemic" when they released the annual drug seizure figures but did cite evidence of a change in the drugs market.

Mr Kellaway said that enforcement action has reduced supply and consequently kept prices higher in Britain than elsewhere in Europe where there had been a general lowering of heroin prices. "We are in some ways the victims of our own success," he said. "The more we stop the more they want to try and get it into Britain."

Customs officers say that Britain has become a premium market with a kilogram selling uncut for £20,000 at a "wholesale" level. At



A user injects heroin which is now worth £20,000 a kilogram at 'wholesale' level, up to £90 a gram at dealer level and £10 for a two-hit 'wrap' on the street PHOTOGRAPH KEVIN WEAVER

'Old buzz' back in fashion Cannabis author jailed

Alex Bellos traces the changing pattern of consumption in Britain's inner cities

IF YOU wanted to "score" heroin in Sheffield 10 years ago, you would drive over the Pennines to your regular dealer in Manchester. You would buy a bag based on weight — maybe a few grammes costing several hundred pounds to get you through the week.

Today you don't need to leave the city. Heroin use has spread from one council estate in north Sheffield to several other socially deprived areas. Each estate probably has a small-time dealer, this time selling by price. You buy a £5 or £10 "wrap", or however much you need immediately.

This pattern of changing consumption was mirrored in courtrations all over Britain, said Harry Shapiro at the Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence. His recent research on heroin use was based on information from outreach workers and drug agencies.

Mike Linnell, at the Manchester drugs agency Life-Line, believes the main factor determining changing drug use is availability. The first big influx of heroin came in the early 1980s. Mr Shapiro says supply stayed steady until three years ago, when it began to boom, pushing prices down and improving quality. He puts this down to a "derogation" of traditional trafficking routes caused by political instability in places like Afghanistan, the former Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe.

Most of heroin's new recruits conform to the "junkie" image — injecting users on the poverty line, possibly homeless with mental health problems. But there is growing anecdotal evidence that recreational drug users are turning to it. For much of the generation that began taking ecstasy in the late 1980s, heroin was an unat-

tractive drug symbolised by the advertising campaign Heroin Screws You Up.

But as ecstasy use has become mainstream — an estimated 500,000 people take it every week — and as regular users look for a new buzz, some have decided to dabble in the older drug.

These young people are more likely to smoke it or snort it. Often it is sold simply as "brown", to avoid the unfashionable connotations of intravenous use. Being able to buy it at £5 or £10 a shot makes it especially attractive.

Cocaine has also benefited from the acceptance of drugs that mass use of ecstasy has brought, according to several drugs agencies. Liz Skeilton, of Crew 2000 in Edinburgh, said the atmosphere in many Scottish clubs had changed dramatically recently, as ravers bored with ecstasy have switched to cocaine.

"You hear that cocaine is as cheap as £40," she said. "If that's true its dangerous; at that price it is encouraging people to synthesise it into crack."

Conviction for 'incitement' has angered campaigners, Duncan Campbell reports

A MAN who published a book explaining how to grow cannabis was yesterday jailed for 12 months for incitement, the first time the law has been used in this way. The judge ordered all copies to be destroyed.

Civil liberty campaigners last night expressed concern at the jailing of someone for publishing freely available material.

Michael Marlowe, aged 51, a disabled musician, was sentenced to 12 months at Worcester crown court for marketing and selling nearly 500 copies of Tricameral Semilla under the name of Maria Warner, Marlowe, of Flaxley, Gloucestershire, was also convicted of harvesting his own plants. An appeal is to be lodged.

Judge Michael Mott told him: "This was a particularly blatant incitement to people to commit crime when you remained hidden behind a double alias."

Marlowe advertised the 128-

page book in Private Eye, Viz and Hemp Nation. The book, which uses domestic technology and common gardening materials, is one of 33 similar publications on sale in bookshops nationally. Would-be purchasers were invited to write to Wild Thing distributors at a PO box in Worcester sending £12.

In October 1994, Marlowe was raided by police who seized his customer database which contained about 250 names and addresses. This list was passed to local forces who raided 20 people who had purchased the book. One was a teacher from Tunbridge Wells, Kent, who had intended to grow a small amount of cannabis in a sauna room.

Last month, at Worcester crown court, prosecuting counsel Philip Bown said of Marlowe who was charged with incitement to produce cannabis: "This man is a crusader."

Andrew Sharpe, defending,

said: "He has gone over the line in what is permissible in encouragement. It's the first time a prosecution has been brought dealing with the publication of a book on a cultivation method."

Evidence that other similar cannabis-growing books had been in wide circulation for many years was deemed inadmissible. Marlowe, who was making his first book-publishing venture, was convicted on a majority decision.

Marlowe said before sentence that he believed cannabis should be decriminalised. "We feel we've been lacerated by the state for a self-indulgence that has no victims."

The director of Liberty, John Wadham, said: "It is very rare in any country for people to go to prison merely for what they write."

A spokesman for the Mick Marlowe defence campaign said: "Using this archaic charge of incitement which has not been used to suppress a book for over 100 years has very serious implications."

The book will now be republished in Amsterdam, with the words "Not for sale in the United Kingdom" on it.

Judges told of 'malign influence' on West trial

Duncan Campbell
Crime Correspondent

SENSATIONALIST press coverage and media contracts with witnesses exerted a "malign influence" over the trial of Rosemary West, the Court of Appeal was told yesterday.

All of the 10 murders for which she was convicted could have been committed by her husband, Fred, acting alone, the court heard.

Richard Ferguson, QC, applying for leave to appeal on

behalf of Mrs West, said that the evidence on three counts of murder was tenuous and on a further seven it was virtually non-existent. Mrs West, who was convicted last November at Winchester crown court of the murders of 10 young women and girls, did not attend the hearing.

Before meeting his wife, Fred West had murdered, raped, assaulted and harassed young women, Mr Ferguson told Lord Taylor, the Lord Chief Justice, sitting with Mr Justice Mitchell and Mr Justice Newman. The possibility

of Fred West being solely responsible was the hook on which Rosemary West hung her case.

Mr Ferguson said the three main arguments were that the media had exercised a "malign influence" before and during the trial; that grossly prejudicial evidence was allowed; and that the jury had not been properly directed on the evidence by the trial judge.

He argued that there had been an abuse of process in allowing the trial to go ahead because of the lapse of time

since the first murder in 1971 and the prejudicial publicity. "Similar fact" evidence about Mrs West's sexual proclivities should not have been allowed. Three of the charges, including those of the murder of Mrs West's daughter, Heather, and step-daughter, Charmaine, should have been severed from the other seven because of their different nature.

Referring to pre-trial coverage of the case, Mr Ferguson said: "It's all highly sensational and highly unfortunate." Mrs West had been

linked with "the House of Horror" and had been described as a nymphomaniac. One story suggested that she stood to make £10 million from her story and another referred to her as a booker.

Prosecution witnesses had made agreements with the media for sums of up to six figures, he said. Clearly there was a temptation for them to exaggerate what had happened. "Put bluntly the more lurid the account, the more valuable the contract."

One witness who had agreed a contract was shown

to have lied in court about her involvement, he said. There was a danger that journalists attending the trial could discuss the evidence with the witnesses with whom they had agreements.

The hearing continues today.

Leo Gately, Mrs West's solicitor, last night denied suggestions by her relatives that she had not wanted the appeal to take place. He said she had instructed him to continue, although she had been unwilling to attend court because of the likely media attention.

Met pays student £7,500 for assault and imprisonment

Clare Dyer

THE Metropolitan Police yesterday agreed to pay an Irish student £7,500 compensation and legal costs in an out-of-court settlement for assault and false imprisonment.

Paul Moran, aged 32, claimed he was stopped and questioned by PCs Keith Lloyd and Ian Whitney as he left his central London house at midnight on December 23, 1992.

He said he was called "an Irish c***", thrown against

his front door, had his hand smashed against a wall, was struck forcibly and thrown into a police van where one officer hit him in the face.

He was then taken to Marylebone police station, searched and unlawfully kept in a cell until 2.30am.

The Police Complaints Authority upheld his complaint of unlawful arrest and detention. The station's custody officer and the arresting officers were strictly admonished, and the Met admitted liability for assault and false imprisonment.



"I'll never forget my mother's face when I told her."

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Hearts & Minds Against Cancer

Hint of support for Alternative Voting system regarded as step in right direction by reform advocates

Blair shift cheers Lib Dems

Patrik Wirtour, Chief Political Correspondent

CO-OPERATION between the two main opposition parties moved a step closer yesterday when senior Liberal Democrats gave an unexpectedly warm welcome to reports that the Labour leader, Tony Blair, is willing to countenance a shift away from first-past-the-post for elections to the Commons.

A variant of which was supported in 1993 by Labour's internal working party on electoral systems, could not be described as proportional representation, which Mr Blair believes hands too much power to small parties.

Labour is already committed to holding a referendum on the electoral system for the Commons, but Mr Blair has been unconvinced of the need for reform.

News of his fresh approach trailed in advance of the weekend Liberal Democrat conference — was greeted by senior Liberal Democrats yesterday as a sign of flexibility. One senior Liberal Democrat closely involved in the dialogue with Labour said: "It

suggests Labour is openly in a fluid position. Before we were in an unsustainable position in which Mr Blair said he was in favour of a referendum, but to the extent he had a personal opinion on the subject, he was opposed to change."

The Liberal Democrat MP added: "AV is not acceptable as a system for us, but we regard any movement by Mr Blair, or sign that he is thinking these constitutional issues through as encouraging and conducive to dialogue."

Under AV, instead of voting for one candidate in a single-member constituency, the voter lists the candidates in order of preference. A candidate has to obtain an overall

majority to be elected. If no candidate has an overall majority of first preferences, the lowest placed candidate drops out with his preferences transferred. The process continues until one candidate achieves an overall majority.

One of Mr Blair's closest allies, Peter Mandelson, has also said his mind is now more open to AV.

A study for the Rowntree Trust of 9,600 electors found the impact of AV on the 1992 elections would have been minimal.

The Conservatives would have won 11 fewer seats, Labour would have won one more and the Liberal Democrats 10 more. Most proportional voting systems, by

contrast, would have boosted Liberal Democrat seats in 1992 to at least 50.

Labour's internal review said AV retained constituency accountability, worked on the clear principle that the winner had to have more than 50 per cent of the votes and allowed voters both to vote for their first choice and then, in their second preference, to vote to stop the political party they most disliked.

Some Labour MPs want electoral reform to coincide with the general election after next, but no detailed thinking has been done.

The Parliamentary Labour Party tomorrow will agree to set up a six-strong body, including the deputy leader

John Prescott and chief whip Donald Dewar, to review whether to bring forward the shadow cabinet elections from November to July.

The earlier the election, the more likely it is that some sitting Shadow Cabinet members may be thrown off, including the shadow health secretary, Harriet Harman.

In an earlier report yesterday of Paddy Ashdown's speech to the Liberal Democrats' spring conference, a typographical error in one paragraph changed the meaning of part of his speech. The paragraph should have read: "It ends in policies which punish the sinner but ignore the sin."

Hugo Young, page 9

Howard yields over rejected EU race law

Stephen Bates in Brussels

MICHAEL HOWARD, the Home Secretary, will how to European pressure today and agree to sign an EU declaration against racism and xenophobia which he rejected last year.

The council of home affairs and interior ministers, meeting in Brussels, will be presented with a slightly amended declaration which would give Britain more leeway for interpretation, but European officials insist it is almost unaltered from what could have been agreed last November.

Then, Mr Howard outraged fellow ministers by displaying his Eurosceptic credentials and rejecting proposals which would have co-ordinated national legislation to make it an offence to incite discrimination, violence or racial hatred, or to distribute xenophobic manifestos.

One of the items in the declaration would have made it a criminal offence to deny the reality of the Jewish Holocaust during the Second World War.

The Home Secretary told his colleagues at that meeting that he would not be lectured by them, and claimed that Britain already had adequate laws to deal with racism.

The decision discomfited ministers, with Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, saying the British was prepared to agree a common position and wanted to be positive over the issue. Since then Mr Howard, who is Jewish, has come under pressure from Jewish groups in Britain to agree to the declaration in full along with the 14 other member states.

Glyn Ford, the Labour MEP for Greater Manchester East, said: "Finally the British government has recognised that it would be indefensible not to be part of a European campaign to stamp out racism."

British officials in Brussels suggested the declaration was still not finally agreed, and argued that its wording had been changed so that Britain would not have to alter its existing legislation against racism before signing it. It is likely that the Government will still reject proposals going through the European Parliament for an international year against racism in 1997.

At today's council, ministers will seek to resolve the impasse over Europe, the cross-border police intelligence gathering agency, whose inauguration has been delayed by British opposition to the use of the European Court of Justice to solve disputes between member states.

Labour HQ 'broke rules on ballot'

Seumas Milne Labour Editor

LABOUR'S national executive was yesterday accused by one of its longest-serving members of being unfair and prejudicial against a union factory convenor, who is seeking a rerun of the contested parliamentary selection ballot in Swindon North.

In a statement to the High Court in London, John Evans, a former ally of Neil Kinnock and an engineering union-sponsored MP, also accused the NEC of breaking party rules by voting last month to impose a candidate in the marginal seat.

The executive's decision to appoint its candidate dented Tony Blair and his deputy, John Prescott — who favoured a new ballot — for the first time since the pair were elected in 1994.

Jim D'Avila, convenor at Rover's Swindon plant, is taking legal action to secure a rerun of the Swindon North nomination, won last September by Michael Wills, a television producer and sometime adviser to the shadow chancellor, Gordon Brown.

That result was not endorsed by Labour's NEC after a party report found that there "may have been tam-

pering with the votes" in a "fundamentally flawed" procedure. But the executive decided by 14 votes to 10 not to reballoon because of divisions in the Swindon party and fear of further bad publicity.

In an affidavit to the court, Mr Evans said that decision had been influenced by prejudice. "All the factors pointed to a rerun of the ballot as the proper course of action," he said.

But in another affidavit Tom Sawyer, Labour's general secretary, said there was no reasonable basis for the NEC not to select the candidate itself. He had seldom

come across such personal animosity or "venosity" of views in disputes of this kind.

Alan Wilkie, QC, representing the Labour Party, said Mr Wills had done nothing wrong and was outraged. David Bean QC, for Mr D'Avila — who is backed by the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union — argued that divisions in the constituency had been orchestrated by those responsible for the original flawed selection procedure.

Yesterday's hearing was before Judge Sir John Vinelott, who told Labour in January to rerun the Swindon ballot or return to court to justify its decision. He said the imposition of a candidate risked deepening divisions.

Deputy Hally, newly-elected president of the AEEU, said yesterday that an independent body, such as the Electoral Reform Society, should be put in charge of Labour parliamentary selections to avoid similar controversies.

Ruth Kelly, a former Guardian reporter, has been selected by Labour to fight the Conservative-held marginal seat of Bolton West. Ms Kelly, who joined the Bank of England in 1994, was chosen from a shortlist of six for the seat represented by the Home Office minister Tom Sackville.



Jim D'Avila... High Court battle to win selection rerun



Michael Wills... won Swindon contest after 'flawed' procedure PHOTOGRAPHS: FRANK MARTIN

Rifkind retreat on referendum

Michael White Political Editor

SENIOR Tory Euro-sceptics last night stepped up their campaign against deeper European integration as the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, backed away from his earlier suggestion that a future referendum on Britain's options would not be binding on Parliament.

In evidence to the Commons select committee on foreign affairs Mr Rifkind told MPs that his remarks on Sunday during a debate on the Normandy and LWT had been misinterpreted.

Though previous referendums had been legally deemed advisory only — to protect the constitutional supremacy of Parliament — governments have said "in practice" that they would accept the outcome", he conceded.

As MPs manoeuvred ahead of Thursday's debate on Mr Rifkind's IGC white paper 14 senior Tory MPs, including Norman Lamont and Jonathan Aitken, sent the Foreign Secretary an open letter proposing limits on the powers of the European Parliament, an end to the practice of appointing politicians to the European Commission when they continue behaving like politi-

MPs divided over right question to ask

ASK MOST MPs exactly what question they'd like to see asked in a second European referendum and you quickly discover why Whitehall is nervous about the subject. They come up with such different answers, writes Michael White.

John Redwood, for example, shares Sir James Goldsmith's view that the single currency is too narrow a focus. He would prefer something closer to: "Are you ready to give up the kind of free trade area envisaged when Britain first joined or would you prefer greater integration?"

Staff of Labour shadow foreign secretary Robin Cook have toyed with ideas. "Now

that the single currency is becoming a reality, do you want to be part of it?" is one option.

Peter Temple-Morris, a Europhile Tory, offers a more loaded version: "Do you agree with the Government's decision that it is in the national interest to be part of a single currency?" Or, even more drastic: "Do you want to be part of the European Union or to leave it?"

Labour's Denis MacShane, pro-EU MP for Rotherham, suggests: "Given the agreement between HMG and its EU partners, do you agree that Britain should continue in membership of the European Union?" He argues: "You can't narrow it down to

the single currency. At the moment it's the pound, in two or three years' time it could be a common army or fish."

Veteran pro-European Liberal Democrat, Sir Russell Johnston, says it would be fairly easy to devise a question about currency. It would be harder to ask such questions as: "Do you believe that foreign and defence policy should be run by the European Commission or by HMG?"

Bill Cash, backbench Tory sceptic, agrees the question would have to "deal with the transfer of powers away from the UK government, parliament and people. It would cover the single currency and central bank, foreign and defence policy. That's essential."

foreign exchange reserves. "It is a decision of such magnitude that of course parliamentarians must ask the people expressly on this issue. We are not elected to Parliament to give the country away," he said.

Mr Rifkind is preparing the cabinet paper expected to open the way to an eventual plebiscite.

Britain to avoid rejoining ERM, page 11

Tactics and timing crucial in staging vote on Britain's future in Europe

Why is everyone talking about a referendum again? Because John Major's cabinet is edging towards promising one if Britain looks like joining a single European currency.

But that's years away? Yes and no. The European Commission will decide as early as 1998 which EU states are eligible to join under the strict monetary criteria

agreed in the 1991 Maastricht Treaty. In the short term Mr Major wants to placate his Euro-sceptic wing — and Sir James Goldsmith — ahead of the forthcoming inter-governmental conference (IGC) to review progress since Maastricht.

But the IGC is quite separate from the single currency issue? Yes. But economic and monetary union (EMU) cannot be separated from deeper political union. Sceptics say EMU is basically a political concept, which is why it is a bad economic idea.

Kenneth Clarke disagrees? Yes, the Chancellor believes that, if there's a strong euro, Britain will not want to be left outside, and it won't mean a loss of sovereignty. He does not like referendums either. Talk of him resigning over the decision is fanned by

his enemies, not his friends. But he is increasingly isolated in Cabinet.

Is Labour also divided? Of course, but Tony Blair is content to let Major take the lead. In 1975 Harold Wilson borrowed Tony Benn's idea for a referendum to swing voters behind British membership of the EEC. The cross-party Yes campaign won by a 2:1 majority.

Timing is crucial then? Timing and the exact question. Goldsmith's Referendum Party is calling for the question to be based on the Maastricht "federalist" agenda, the ballot to be on election day, he says. Speaker's conference will decide the exact wording. He won't get it.

That degree of suspicion assumes that there would only be a referendum if the Government had decided in favour and was determined

to manipulate a Yes result? Exactly. Would a referendum be binding or merely advisory?

In theory no referendum can be binding. In practice they are. Wasn't Mr Major against a referendum in 1993 as "alien to our traditions" and crypto-fascist?

That quote is actually Attlee talking to Churchill. But most top politicians do not like the device when in power. It restricts their freedom of manoeuvre. Margaret Thatcher opposed Labour's three referendums in the 1970s — on Europe and on Welsh and Scottish devolution, despite all three delivering the answers she wanted. But by 1993 she was saying "let the people speak". She was by then retired.

Michael White



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US court orders commerce department to stop Italy's use of illegal driftnets in the Mediterranean

Mafia fishing fleets face trade ban

John Hooper in Rome

WHILE the European Union's fisheries commissioner, Emma Bonino, has been reading the riot act to British trawlers, her own country has been told it could face a \$1 billion a year trade ban for over-fishing the Mediterranean.

Last month a US judge concluded that Italian boats were defying an international ban on the use of huge plastic-film driftnets and ordered the department of commerce to enforce a US law implementing the ban. This would mean stopping Italian fish imports unless Rome complies.

According to US sources, Italian officials have pleaded that much of the driftnet fleet is beyond the reach of government enforcement because it

is controlled by organised crime.

Stily's Cosa Nostra and other mafias in Puglia, Calabria and the Naples area are known to have used local fishing fleets to transport contraband, notably drugs.

Driftnets which are left to drift, unattended to a vessel, are used by Italian fishermen to catch swordfish and tuna, but they also trap numerous other species.

In 1989 the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling on members to suspend the use of driftnets longer than 1.5 miles from the end 1992. Numerous countries, including Japan, Korea and Taiwan, have since complied. The EU enacted its own ban four years ago.

A recent Food and Agriculture Organisation report said the main area of illegal fish-

Brussels commissioner accuses UK of inaction

THE European fisheries commissioner, Emma Bonino, accused Britain yesterday of failing to act to prevent foreign ships from plundering its fish quota by "quota hopping", writes Rebecca Smithers.

Mrs Bonino, in London for a meeting with the fisheries minister Tony Baldry

said that between 1986 and 1994 Britain had failed to provide "matching funds" which would have unlocked EU money set aside to cover the cost of fishermen taking their boats out of service.

Britain had been expected to contribute 30 per cent of the cost, the Euro-

pean Union providing the remaining 70 per cent. But Mrs Bonino said: "The EU part of the money was there but the national part — the matching funds — was not available."

She said the European element — estimated to be about £12 million — was now "lost forever".

law of their own country and the rest of the world".

His ruling could severely embarrass Italy's president, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, who is due to pay a state visit to the United States next month.

Once the US commerce department has formally identified Italy as a violator of the driftnet ban, Rome will have only 90 days in which to satisfy the US authorities that its fleet has complied.

Otherwise it faces an embargo on the import of all its fish and fish products.

Additional sanctions would be imposed if the import ban failed to have an effect. A spokesman for the US embassy in Rome said: "The Italians have assured us that they want to reach an agreement to avoid an embargo, and obviously we would prefer to handle it that way as well."

World news in brief

Bonn criticises Paris for its defence plans

SIMMERING tension between France and Germany over Nato's future and European defence was exposed yesterday when Bonn told Paris that its thinking on security was out of line and that it would resist French attempts to dilute the transatlantic alliance.

In a speech outside Bonn, Werner Hoyer, the German official responsible for European Union policy, rejected French proposals for reforming Europe's security and signalled opposition to any attempt to do away with the Nato command structure headed by the United States.

Mr Hoyer's speech revealed German reservations and frustrations about President Jacques Chirac's penchant for going it alone on military matters.

"The reform ideas that French defence minister [Charles] Millon recently announced do not agree with Germany's ideas," Mr Hoyer said. "We clearly reject ideas that would end up replacing Nato's integrated command structure and will speak out against every measure that could even give the impression of driving a wedge into the transatlantic relationship." — *Ian Traynor, Bonn.*

Kurd expulsion calls

LEADING government and opposition politicians in Germany called yesterday for the expulsion of Kurdish activists after a weekend of battles between police and Kurds that left hundreds injured and hundreds more in jails detained.

The riots, which happened during a banned demonstration in the north-west town of Dortmund to coincide with the Kurdish New Year, shocked the public.

President Roman Herzog said last night that foreigners engaging in "violence and terror" had forfeited the right to stay in Germany. The foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, called the violence a "declaration of war" against the German legal system and Manfred Kanther, the interior minister, blamed the PKK — Kurdistan Worker's Party — which is banned in Germany.

The opposition Social Democrats called on the 500,000-strong Kurdish community in Germany to isolate the PKK.

An anonymous female caller to local radio stations near the north-west town of Eschweiler yesterday threatened that children would be killed unless the 600 Kurds detained were released.

About 4,000 Kurds took part in the demonstration. The 400 injured included 40 police. — *Ian Traynor, Bonn.*

Poll blow to Mugabe

FEWER than half of Zimbabwe's 4.9 million voters cast ballots in the weekend presidential polls, seen as a mere formality after a boycott by those challenging the incumbent, Robert Mugabe.

Interim figures released by election officials yesterday showed that 1,537,086 people — about 31.4 per cent of the registered electorate — voted in the elections, which Mr Mugabe won by default after his two opponents pulled out of the race.

"It will be a major blow to Mugabe, especially considering how hard he has been campaigning," said John Mumbere, a political analyst at the University of Zimbabwe in Harare.

In the month before the elections Mr Mugabe, aged 72, held 40 campaign rallies, calling for a massive vote in an attempt to prove he still enjoyed support after 16 years in power. His last opponent, Bishop Abel Muzorewa, pulled out on the eve of the polls and his other challenger, the veteran politician Ndabandabi Sithole, withdrew last Tuesday. — *Reuter, Harare.*

Amnesty slams UN body

THE United Nations' top human-rights watchdog opened its annual session yesterday to praise from the UN secretary-general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and criticism from Amnesty International.

Amnesty urged the Human Rights Commission to put five countries — China, Turkey, Nigeria, Indonesia and Colombia — on its agenda for the first time.

"The commission is losing its credibility and will show itself to be weak and self-contradictory if it continues to ignore the fact that human rights are brazenly suppressed in these countries," Amnesty said.

In a placatory opening speech, Mr Boutros-Ghali said human rights would be best promoted by a combination of diplomacy, democracy and development.

He said the commission's work was more necessary than ever, given the upsurge in atrocities committed during civil wars. "It is the populations themselves which are targeted, humiliated, tortured. Civilians, including women and children, are massacred pitilessly." — *AP, Geneva.*

Message of reconciliation

HOURS after his election, Sierra Leone's new president, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, appealed yesterday to refugees from his civil war to return home and urged citizens to co-operate in bringing peace and economic stability.

"With Sierra Leone's wealth in human and material resources, I see no reason why the ingenuity, talent and drive of our citizens should not be utilized to create a new society," Mr Kabbah said.

The leader of Sierra Leone's oldest political party was declared the winner of a presidential runoff held on Friday. Mr Kabbah, aged 64, won 59.4 per cent of the votes, defeating John Karefa-Smart.

Mr Kabbah said his government would continue attempts launched by the outgoing military regime to bring the rebels to peace talks. On Sunday the military government claimed that the rebel army had agreed to an immediate ceasefire and peace talks — although there was no confirmation from the rebels. — *AP, Freetown.*



Recruits from the banned Ukrainian national assembly train at their base near Khust, 350 miles west of Kiev. Since Russia's parliament voted to keep the Soviet Union, Ukrainian nationalists have stepped up their activities

Hundred dead in disco fire

ABOUT 100 people were killed in a blaze early yesterday in a Manila disco jammed with youngsters celebrating the end of the Philippine academic year, rescue workers said.

Mary appeared to have been trampled to death in a stampede for the narrow passage leading to the exit at the Ozone Disco Pub in the Quizon City district of the capital. Others were killed when the blazing ceiling collapsed on them.

Tenage survivors described a desperate rush for the door when lights went out and flames roared through the nightspot. "I fell down near the exit door and people were stepping on me," said one. "I thought I was going to die." — *Reuter, Manila.*

Moscow bus bomb made safe

A POWERFUL bomb left on a bus in the Russian capital was defused 15 minutes before it would have gone off, security sources said yesterday. The bomb, almost nine pounds of explosive with a timer attached, was found by the bus driver on Sunday afternoon when he heard something ticking inside an abandoned parcel.

The bus's route took it along Kutuzovskiy Prospekt, the elite "government chaussee" along which Boris Yeltsin's motorcade travels between his home and the Kremlin. A possible link to the Chechen separatist movement was being investigated. — *James Mack, Moscow.*

Row as author backs Serbs

Ian Traynor in Bonn

ONE of the foremost living writers in Germany has sparked a bitter row over fate and innocence in the Balkan wars with a new book defending the Serbs, who he says have been maligned by the distortions of the international media and Western governments.

German intellectuals are in uproar over the book by Peter Handke, aged 53, a Austrian citizen of mixed German-Slovene blood. He is now on a controversial reading tour of Germany, Austria and Slovenia, promoting the book, in which he attacks the Western media, intellectuals and governments for their treatment of the Serbs.

Mr Handke is the most prominent figure in the German cultural world to come out so strongly in defence of the Serbs, prompting accusations that he is oblivious to genocide, war crimes and the destruction of Bosnia. Coverage has been keenly pro-Croatian for years.

The book, *A Writer's Journey to the Rivers Danube, Sava, Morava and Drina, or Justice for Serbia*, takes the form of a travelogue combined with an emotional and violent denunciation of what he says is widespread anti-Serb bias.

Bosnian victims of the Serb detention camps have been staging protests outside the venues of Mr Handke's reading tour, calling on him to speak not only to the Serbs, but to them too.

Despite the furore he has sparked in Germany, France, and even Serb writers accuse him of naivety, wilful malice and ignorance — Mr Handke is utterly unapologetic.

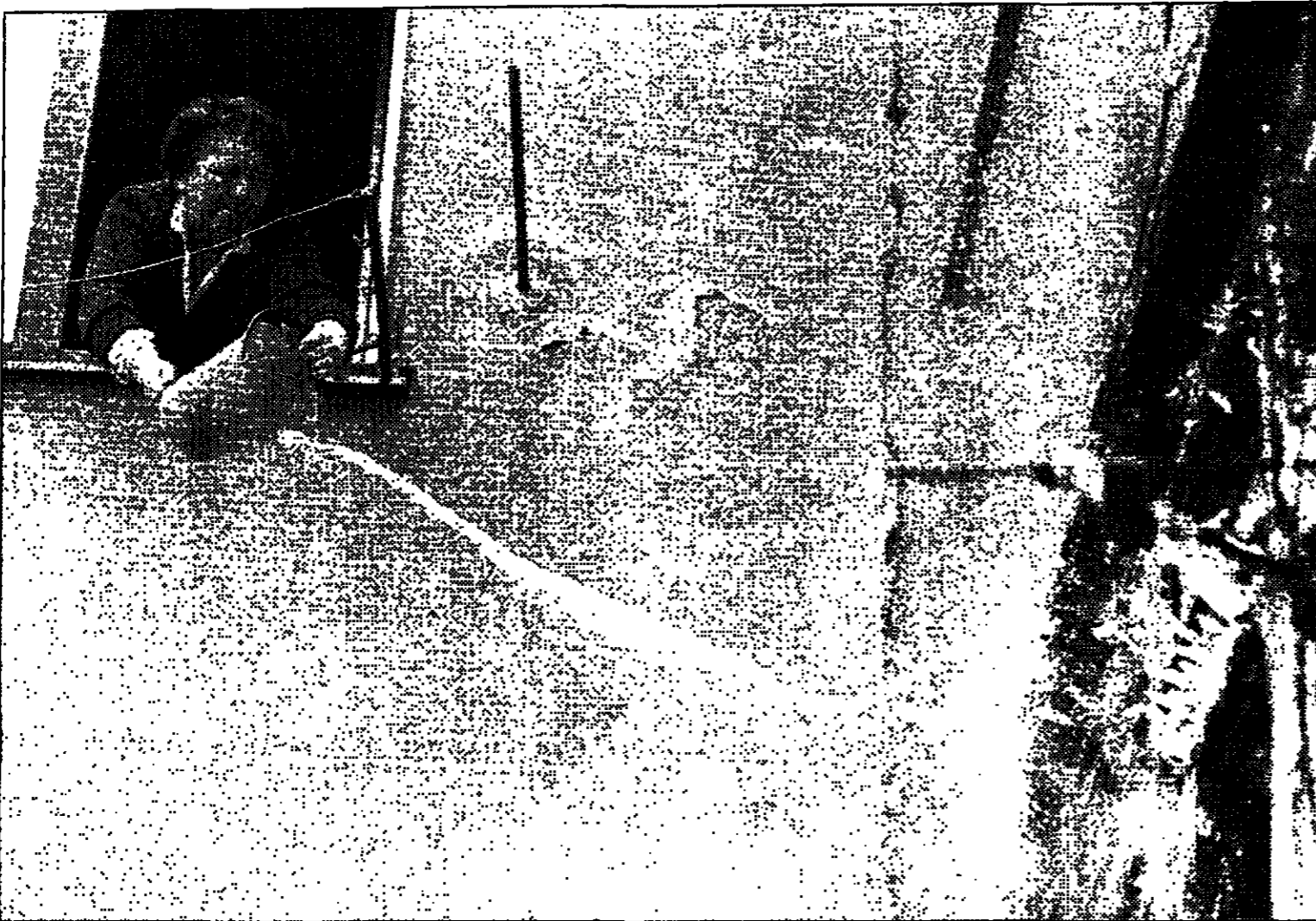
In an interview published yesterday in the Vienna news magazine *Profil*, he stepped up his attacks on German policy, and hammered the Austrian government for good measure.

"The politicians who consciously or unconsciously collaborated in destroying Yugoslavia have to see that they just can't exclude Serbia. The only country that gains from the current solution is Germany."

"Germany has every interest in having as many servile little statelets dependent on it, the economic giant, as possible. That gets clearer and clearer."

Austrian policy, particularly when the wars erupted in 1991, was "unforgivable, eternally unforgivable", he said.

"I've never experienced anything so awful in my life..."



A drop in the ocean... A Bosnian woman tries to put out a fire in a flat in the Sarajevo suburb of Grabavica yesterday

Serbs leave final stronghold blazing

Julian Borger in Sarajevo

TO THE sound of crackling fires and exploding ammunition, Bosnian Serb police pulled out of their last Sarajevo stronghold yesterday, paving the way for the city's final reunification after four years of war and siege.

About 40 policemen in blue fatigues stood to attention as the Serb flag was removed from their improvised headquarters in Grabavica, the fifth and final Sarajevo suburb to be transferred to the Bosnian government under the Dayton accord.

Milanko Karisik, a local politician, vowed that the Serbs would return to reclaim their share of the Bosnian capital. "We will be the last to leave but the first to come back. It may be in this generation or the next, but we will return."

A nearby roof which had been burning fiercely exploded as one of many weapons caches caught fire.

The police were unperurbed. The Serb authorities have done nothing to hinder the widespread arson that has marked their departure from the suburbs.

Italian and French Nato patrols were substantially increased in the last few days of Serb control, but were unable to suppress arson and looting in a built-up area.

Twelve suspected arsonists detained by Italian Nato troops and handed over to the Grabavica police were immediately released, adding weight to allegations that the burning of the suburbs was sanctioned by the Serb leadership.

Federal police were due to move into Grabavica at six o'clock this morning. Their arrival will mark the complete reunification of a city partitioned since April 1992.

Only an estimated tenth of the city's original Serb population will stay on under the Muslim-Croat Federation, however. Most were persuaded to leave by their own leaders, who are determined to maintain ethnic segregation.

The campaign of arson appears to be aimed at the 1,500 Serbs, Muslims and Croats who have opted to remain in Grabavica. Gangs of Serb arsonists have started fires directly above and below flats which are still occupied.

With very little firefighting equipment at their disposal, Nato troops can only try to save civilians trapped in the suburbs.

Sixteen local residents who had hoped to stay in their flats until the arrival of the federation police fled fires and intimidation to spend the

night in a "safe house" set up by the UN refugee agency.

The safe house, two flats on the first floor of an apartment block, is protected by unarmed UN police. Nato, ever reluctant to be drawn deeper into ordinary policing, refused to post a permanent guard.

Three months after the deployment of the Nato-led implementation force (I-Por), Nato officials reported general compliance with military aspects of the Dayton agreement but said one significant issue remained unresolved in the run-up to the 90-day milestone at midnight tonight.

By then, the armies are meant to have pulled back two kilometres from the line separating the federation and the Serb Republic. Major Simon Haselock, the Nato spokesman in Sarajevo, said the Muslim-led Bosnian army

had shown no signs of withdrawing from its main bases in the city, which fall within the demilitarised zone.

Major Haselock said I-Por had rejected a request by the Bosnian government for permission to keep 4,500 of its men inside Sarajevo's Tito Barracks and other bases.

A Bosnian Croat commander indicted for war crimes by the UN tribunal is being sheltered by the Croatian government, an opposition newspaper claimed.

Trica Rajic was indicted seven months ago for the murder of 16 Muslims in the Bosnian village of Stupni Do in 1993. Under the Dayton accord the Croatian government must hand him over, but the Feral Tribune said he was staying under an assumed name at a holiday complex run by the Croatian defence ministry in Split.

France sends in conscripts to stop school violence

Paul Webster in Paris

MORE than 2,000 extra national servicemen are to be drafted into French schools in one of several urgent measures to protect pupils and teachers from increasing violence and outside threats.

Details will be announced tomorrow by the education minister, Francois Bayrou. The measures will form part of a new programme based on three years of experiments involving 2,500 national servicemen. The men, who do not carry arms or wear uniforms, are already serving their 10 months' conscription period as school auxiliary staff.

The prime minister, Alain Juppé, announced on television the dispatch of 2,500 extra recruits before the autumn term — without linking it to the Dunblane massacre, which has been front page news in France. But education officials said the Scottish murders had added to French concern that schools were becoming more unsafe.

Apart from regular reports of violence against teachers and pupils by outsiders, there

have been some high-profile cases. In 1993 nursery school children were taken hostage in the Paris suburb Neuilly, and last year a bomb exploded outside a Jewish school in Lyon.

The extra national servicemen will also help to control internal violence, including attacks on staff by parents and pupils, and student vandalism, such as the bomb made by three youths which blew up a washroom in a school in northern France last week.

Mr Juppé said one of the most urgent measures to be discussed at tomorrow's cabinet meeting was barbed punishment for intruders, including fines up to £1,200 or prison terms for trespass.

Most schools already have video cameras and restricted access.

An education official said the transfer of national servicemen followed increasing demands from staff, particularly in poor suburbs, for more help.

The conscripts' main tasks are to run clubs, provide escorts for outings, help administrative staff and act as monitors.

Belgium's busy robbers create cash drought

Stephen Bates in Brussels

BANK robbers are close to succeeding, where two world wars and the European Union's grand design for economic and monetary union have so far failed, in creating a cash crisis in Belgium.

The situation — which has left some banks and businesses almost out of cash — is due to a strike by security guards protesting about the risks they face following a spate of armed robberies in which two of their number have died.

The government called in 2,000 heavily armed police on Sunday to supervise the collection in armoured vans of takings from large stores and companies.

The interior minister, Johan Vande Lanotte, who organised the operation, insisted that he was not trying to break the strike.

"The action was absolutely necessary because everything was getting

very unsafe," he said. "My concern is security, not the economy."

But the operation may have come just in time, because there is a serious possibility of the banks running out of ready cash: virtually none has been delivered for a fortnight.

Two-thirds of cashpoint machines are now empty, leaving hundreds of Brussels residents and tourists without money over the weekend. Businesses are being advised to pay clients with what notes they have in their tills rather than by bank transfer. They have been asked to take their cash to the banks.

It is estimated the money supply could dry up by the end of the week unless a settlement is reached with the 1,200 striking guards.

The guards struck after the second fatality in three months. Marc Brusselmans, aged 36, was shot after handing over money bags he had been about to deliver to a night safe at

Acroz in the province of Hainaut.

Belgium's usually placid streets are gaining the atmosphere of the Wild West, as robbers routinely shoot it out with the police and security staff in broad daylight.

The 50 attacks last year were exceeded this year in January alone, when there were 73 raids.

The strikers are demanding an end to night collections, and three rather than two guards in each van. Some security companies have said they will continue to collect money at night, and have offered volunteers the equivalent of 40p an hour extra in danger money.

Stephane Boeque, a spokesman for the Belgian arm of Group 4 Security, said: "Moving transports to daytime will just move everything into the light. The robberies already cause more victims in the day. An extra man would not offer any additional security — he'd just be one more potential victim."

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Taiwanese flee 'front-line' islet

Andrew Higgins in Tung Chu island, Matsu archipelago

IT TAKES Chen Chi-ming little more than a minute to sprint from his house through a paddled path to a Taoist temple and down into what must be Taiwan's loneliest bomb shelter.

Burrowed into a ramblished bluff barely a dozen miles from the scene of China's latest war games, and even closer to the Chinese mainland, the reinforced bunker was built decades ago to protect scores of people from the shells of the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

Should war break out today, Mr Chen may have to tremble alone. Nearly everyone else on his street has fled to Taiwan proper, seeking more secure protection from China's military.

"It's impossible to know what China might decide to do next," said Mr Chen, who has stocked a warren of underground rooms with provisions. He has a mobile phone to keep in touch with his family and friends.

Many Taiwanese, separated from China by more than 100 miles of sea, can shrug off Beijing's bellicose rhetoric and seemingly endless displays of firepower. Nonchalance does not come easy, however, on Tung Chu island, the closest Taiwanese territory to war games due to start yesterday.

"We are all furious that the Chinese communists are showing off their military on our doorstep," said Tsao Chuan-shuan, an anti-aircraft gunner for the string of islets known as the Matsu archipelago. "Of course people are worried."

Mr Tsao estimated that of a civilian population of 587 on

Bombast threat to Los Angeles

LOWER-LEVEL Chinese officials threatened to launch nuclear bombs at Los Angeles if the United States defends Taiwan against any Chinese attack, the state department said.

"Some Chinese lower-level officials told some visiting American officials that we wouldn't dare defend Taiwan because they'd rain nuclear bombs on Los Angeles," said Winston Lord, the assistant secretary of state for East Asia and the Pacific.

He dismissed the reported threat as "a little disinformation and some psychological warfare", and said a senior Chinese official had denied it. — Reuter.

Tung (Eastern) Chu and nearby Hsi (Western) Chu, fewer than 200 remained.

Gale-force winds and driving rains seem to have kept the Chinese navy in port yesterday. A PLA ground force of more than 150,000 troops, massed along the coast a few miles away, was reported to have begun its part in massive combined manoeuvres that will straddle Taiwan's first democratic presidential election on Saturday.

The PLA's latest sabre-rattling is an attempt to put voters off President Lee Teng-hui, the election front-runner.

Virtually the only people left on Tung Chu are hundreds of Taiwanese soldiers equipped with anti-aircraft guns and, for the first time in years, roaring tanks into the rock.

On the main street is a ram-

shackle row of empty video game parlours, silent karaoke bars and grocery shops. Merchants who stayed to watch their shops curse China for ruining business. Soldiers, usually their best customers, are mostly confined to their bunkers and pillboxes.

On a fine day, the mainland is clearly visible from Tung Chu, a barren speck dotted with statues of Chiang Kai-shek and huge slogans demanding vigilance and, one day, vengeance against the PLA for driving Generalissimo Chiang from the mainland in 1949.

Yesterday, low clouds and fog smothered the silver of sea separating the two combatants in China's unfinished civil war.

At the primary school, headmaster Wang Chien-hua surveyed a deserted, rain-soaked playground. All but five of his 25 pupils have fled with their parents. With barely anyone left to teach, Mr Wang decreed that the spring break would start yesterday, instead of next month.

As headmaster, he is also chief returning officer for the election. The island's only polling booth is the school gymnasium, where Mr Wang expects fewer than 50 voters.

On Tung Chu, at least, China has succeeded in disrupting the Chinese-speaking world's first attempt to select a leader by direct democratic election.

The official bravado of Taiwan's military is intact. "I've been a soldier for 20 years; I've never been afraid," said Major Wang Lung-Hsiang, an anti-aircraft officer of an anti-aircraft post manned by sheltering young conscripts.

"If we got scared every time they held an exercise, we would be constantly terrified." He tugged at his belt to show he had no gun.

Israeli blockade keeps mother and baby apart

Derek Brown in Abu Dis

BRITISH aid worker in Palestine has been separated from her baby son for almost three weeks by Israel's border closures.

Jo Simister's Palestinian husband, Ahmed Yunis, is a physiotherapist who completed his doctorate in Northern Ireland last year, and now teaches in the blockaded University. On February 14 he took their Belfast-born son, Umaysa, to the Gaza Strip to visit his family. As a stateless Palestinian, he also needed to renew his papers.

Father and son have been trapped in the blockaded territory ever since, and Ms Simister has been refused permission to join them.

"He was eight months old then. Now he is nine months," she said yesterday from the family home in Abu Dis outside Jerusalem.

"I am very calm today because I am very angry. When my energies are channelled into being angry, they are not channelled into crying."

Ms Simister is not naturally the crying kind. She came as an active Quaker to the Israeli-occupied West Bank in 1984, when the intifada, the Palestinian uprising, started. More recently

she has worked with Save the Children.

Marrying Dr Yunis gave Jo Simister no right to live in Israeli-controlled territory. And although her husband trained in the United Kingdom, he is not entitled to a British passport. Umaysa has both British and Irish passports.

The family has now fallen into the quagmire produced by Israel's twin obsessions: keeping the Palestinians at arm's length while continuing to control them.

The present closure of Israel's borders, the latest in a long succession, was imposed in February after the first of the series of four horrific suicide bombings by Islamist fanatics which killed 62 people.

The clampdown has been accompanied by curfews and a series of "internal" restrictions, curtailing Palestinian movement in the West Bank, and almost completely cutting off the Gaza Strip.

The clampdown has led to widespread unemployment, food shortages, and the death of at least four patients when ambulances were delayed at checkpoints. Palestinians have bitterly denounced Israel's tactics as naked collective punishment.

The restrictions apply not only to Palestinians but also

to foreign passport holders, including aid workers.

Dr Yunis has an additional problem. His family lives in a refugee camp in Rafah, at the southern end of the Gaza Strip. He therefore needs extra papers to be able to work in Bethlehem, ostensibly under the control of the Palestinian Authority, and to live in Abu Dis, where control is, in theory, shared by Israel and Palestine.

In the turmoil caused by the closure, Dr Yunis has been unable to renew his papers. Even if he could, he would not be allowed to leave Gaza. And even though his wife has a British passport, she is not allowed to enter Gaza.

"I know my case is not the most deserving, and that a lot of people are suffering more," she said.

Rashid Mohammed Ibrahim Saqar, a Muslim militant who allegedly planned to carry out a suicide bombing during President Clinton's Israeli visit, was recruited by promises of virgins in paradise and divine forgiveness for his family, he said yesterday.

The militant, aged 22, arrested last week by Palestinian police, disclosed this during an interview in his Gaza City jail cell by Israel radio.



Mass exodus... Taiwanese civilians fleeing Matsu Island wait to leave the boat on the Taiwanese mainland yesterday. They travelled with soldiers who have completed two years of military service on Matsu. PHOTOGRAPH: EDDIE SHIH

Riot for body of rebel leader

Lena Pardomuan in Jakarta

SEVERAL hundred youths rioted in the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya yesterday after they were refused access to a town where the body of a jailed independence leader was being taken for burial.

A military spokesman, Captain Edi Sulistyadi, said riots broke out in the town of Ahepura when the body of Thomas Wapoi Wainggal, who died last Tuesday while serving a prison sentence in Jakarta, arrived for burial in the provincial capital Jayapura, 12 miles away. It seems that the protesters, mainly students, wanted to take Wainggal's body to the university where he taught.

Diplomats said Wainggal was believed to have had close links with the separatist Free Papua Movement (OPM), which is fighting for an independent Irian Jaya and is holding 11 hostages, including four Britons. They feared the protests were likely to complicate efforts to free the hostages, held for 10 weeks.

Capt Sulistyadi said 300-400 protesters burnt cars and a market and damaged buildings. Injuries were reported but no deaths. Residents said Jayapura, 2,200 miles east of Jakarta, was sealed off, offices were shut and residents stayed indoors. Calm was restored by evening.

Wainggal was sentenced to 20 years in jail for proclaiming an independent Melanesian state in Irian Jaya during a flag-raising ceremony in 1987. He died of heart problems on the way to hospital.

This is the second case of violence in the province. Last week tribespeople rioted in the towns of Timika and Tembagapura, where Freeport Indonesia operates one of the world's largest copper and gold mines.

Yesterday the Indonesian military turned down the rebels' demand for recognition of their cause in return for the hostages' release.

"All this is bound to strengthen the hand of those who are pushing for the insurance policy of the hostages," a foreign diplomat said. — Reuter.

Explorer adds spice to historic adventure

John Aglionby in Jakarta on how the Internet is to record 19th-century perils on voyage retracing a naturalist's steps

THE Anglo-Irish explorer and author Tim Severin has embarked on a perilous voyage through Indonesia's remote spice islands, retracing the steps of the pioneering 19th-century naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace.

Mr Severin, aged 55, has already crossed the Atlantic in a leatherskin boat named the St Brendan, to prove that fifth century Irish monks could have discovered America, and has also retraced the routes of Simbad the Sailor, Jason's Argonauts and Marco Polo.

He embarked on his latest voyage in an undecked 48ft wooden two-masted sailing vessel similar to the one Wallace used on his many trips around eastern Indonesia in the 1850s.

It was built by local boatbuilders in an unspoiled 1,240 miles east of Jakarta. They worked without drawings and used their arms for measuring. Their

tools were similar to those their forefathers used to build Wallace's vessel.

But Mr Severin's boat is equipped with satellite and computer technology and will stay in touch with the world via the Internet.

Named the Alfred Wallace, it will travel through the Moluccan islands in honour of the adventurer who, with Charles Darwin, first announced the theory of natural selection.

At the moment the winds are light enough to begin our sailing lessons without too many risks, but progress is mostly with a little outboard engine," Mr Severin wrote in an electronic mail message sent to news agencies via satellite.

The expedition intends to research changes in the flora and fauna of the Moluccas in the past 150 years, since Wallace made his discoveries.

Mr Severin said: "In his seven years of travelling in the Moluccas, Wallace crashed frequently on coral reefs, was nearly sunk by storms, had to avoid pirates, and accidentally marooned two of his crew on an uninhabited island when a strong current swept the boat away."

"Hopefully, the engine will prevent us from having to re-enact too many of these events, but there is little we can do if we are struck by either a hurricane or a flat calm."

The 1,200-mile route will take the expedition to what were once the most sought-

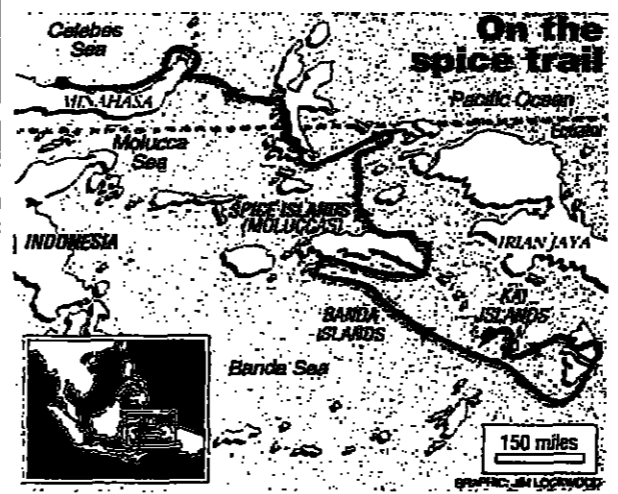
after islands in the world — the home of nutmeg, cloves and mace.

The British and Dutch fought for decades to control these islands. The Dutch gave up Manhattan for one of the tiny Banda Islands to secure a monopoly of the spice trade.

Mr Severin is not after such conquests. "I'll be quite happy just to reach the end in one piece, having provided useful research material to students around the world," he said.

He plans to send photographic and video images to construct an Internet homepage mapping out his travels for schools on the World Wide Web. Pupils will be able to read about the scientists' findings and answer questions to the host. Scientists will post information as they make their way around the 10 tiny archipelagos they intend to visit.

"The purpose is to create the first Internet-based education programme of its kind," Mr Severin said yesterday on his trials from the Kai islands.



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News in brief

Parisians burn homeless man
Four youths doused two homeless men sleeping in a central Paris doorway with alcohol and set one alight, burning him to death, French rags reported.

The other escaped to alert the police, who hope a bottle of fuel alcohol left at the scene will help them identify the killers. — AP.

Fruit surprise
The Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi said yesterday that she and her followers had escaped a pelting at a memorial ceremony for the former prime minister U Nu, because the young men hired by the authorities to throw tomatoes at them refused to do so. — AP.

Spymaster's end
Ray Cline, head of the CIA intelligence directorate in the early 1980s, who later wrote that it "was not illogical" for the agency to employ the Mafia to assassinate Fidel Castro, has died at the age of 77. He was suffering from Alzheimer's disease. — AP.

Greek poet dies
The Greek poet and Nobel laureate Odysseus Elytis died at his Athens home yesterday, aged 84, apparently from a heart attack. — AP.

Obituary, page 10

Voodoo devotees mark tragic diaspora

Benin is celebrating how slavery took its religion across the world — and enriched Western culture, writes Howard French

THERE are no factory whistles to compete with the church bells or the muzzin's call to prayer in the sun-battered town of Ouidah.

At first glance, little would give away its place in history, if it were not for the small Portuguese fort which now serves as a museum to a trade in humans that last century made the town the capital of the Slave Coast.

At the price of 1.5 million souls shipped away in bondage, perhaps no place in Africa has exported so much to the culture of the Americas.

From Creole New Orleans to the swamps of Florida, from Baptist church shouts to blues lyrics, talk of hoodoo and mojo — references to Ouidah's ancient religion, Vodoun — has sprinkled American life.

Ouidah's influence extends further, to Trinidad, Brazil and Cuba, where religions like Santeria and Candomble

walked on our soil they began calling on 'setishists', he said through an interpreter. "That was the first of many efforts by whites to introduce their beliefs and destroy our culture."

Mr Houna's explanation of his religion is not simple. There is one God, Mawu, but countless names for his manifestations, as shown in the murals and symbols of spirits such as Gu, Legba, Damballa and Hevisso — all common figures in Haitian religion.

What he seeks to make clear is that Vodoun has nothing to do with the common Western perception of sticking pins in dolls.

There are women who cannot conceive children, men who cannot find work and elders who cannot find peace," Mr Houna said. "Vodoun restores hope."

In belated recognition of

the faith's importance, Benin's president, Nicéphore Soglo, earlier this year named January 10 a national holiday in honour of Vodoun.

Just as Vodoun priests in Ouidah have kept their faith alive, members of the De Souza family have worked to preserve the memory of their Brazilian ancestor, Don Francisco Felix de Souza, who came to the town in 1754 to run the Portuguese slaving fort. He was named viceroy in 1818 by a local king.

Last autumn, after nearly 30 years with no one on the family "throne", the De Souzas named their eighth viceroy: Honore Feliciano Juliano de Souza, from Lomé, Togo.

The new viceroy's priority is rebuilding the original home of his ancestor, which afforded a clear view of what is known today as the Slave Route.

Today the route is lined with painted statues representing Benin's once powerful royalty. Close to the windswept coast stands a monument to the slaves, erected in 1992.

"We have been taught that this represents what Africa has given to the world," said a boy playing in the sand. — New York Times.

Benin's president named January 10 a holiday in honour of Vodoun

Poll runoff to pick president

VOTERS in Benin went to the polls yesterday to choose between President Nicéphore Soglo and his predecessor, Mathieu Kérékou, a former Marxist who ruled for 17 years.

In 1990 Mr Kérékou was forced to hand power to a caretaker government after riots and strikes. Mr Soglo, a former World Bank administrator aged 62, became Benin's first democratically elected president in 1991.

The two men were neck-and-neck in the first round of voting on March 3. The third-place candidate took 18 per cent of the vote and gave his support to Mr Kérékou. Results from yesterday's runoff are not expected for several days.

Mr Soglo is credited with building a democracy which sparked one of the fastest-growing economies in the region, but his dismantling of Mr Kérékou's socialist system caused unemployment, inflation, and other hardships. — AP.

A saturated arms race

There are better ways of spending \$5 billion

THE ARMS TRADE bazaar is thriving in the Middle East, with the United Arab Emirates the latest buyer in the field for sophisticated goodies. The three biggest international arms merchants — the US, Britain and France — have just submitted final proposals for a deal involving up to 80 state-of-the-art planes at a cost of \$5 billion. Britain, as the Guardian reported yesterday, may be close to clinching a separate contract for a new "super-intelligent" type of cruise missile. There is much expert salivation at what is being described as possibly the last contract of its size and kind this century. The British public will be invited to applaud the efforts of those, in Lady Thatcher's famous phrase, who are battling for Britain. But — just weeks after the Scott report — should we not pause and ask what purpose is served by this single-minded pursuit of the sale of lethal technology?

France and the US have already concluded defence related deals with the UAE for more than \$4 billion in the past two years. If the transactions now being discussed go through, the total bill will work out at roughly \$6,000 per head of the country's population. If the figure is calculated in terms of UAE nationals (who only constitute a quarter of total inhabitants) then it will cost them \$20,000 each. Another way of doing the sums would show a cost of \$120,000 per square kilometre of semi-arid desert. The UAE can raise the cash, but these figures illustrate the absurdity of arming small territories to the hilt.

These deals are being proposed not because they make strategic sense but because these weapons are the status symbols of mini-statehood virility — and because the Gulf states have the petro-dollars to pay for them. No one is rushing to provide other small states around the world with 21st century military technology. It is true that the UAE has a dispute with Iran over three

small islands in the Gulf. But what is the contingency being planned for here — that Tehran should be bombed to the International Court at The Hague or driven off the islands by a hail of missiles?

The UAE's ability to utilise effectively, in purely military terms, the equipment which it may purchase is in any case very doubtful. Similar doubts surround the whole post-1990 enterprise of Gulf-wide military cooperation through the Gulf Cooperation Council. The UAE's insistence on negotiating a defence treaty with those countries which will supply the arms is significant. Sell us the weapons, runs the subtext, but only if you will come and help us if we ever need to use them. This stipulation is causing problems for Britain, not on grounds of principle, but because it could involve subjecting British troops to UAE law. Whether or not this would include whipping for adulterers is not clear, but it might certainly prove politically embarrassing to say the least.

The British government signed up after the Gulf War for an international effort to reduce the flow of arms to the Middle East. Yet since then the arming of the Gulf has reached saturation point. The argument that "British jobs are at stake" concedes that the policy may be indefensible on other grounds. In fact the economic claim is much less attractive for the nation when the actual terms including soft loans and credit guarantees are taken into account. These financial resources are finite and would be better devoted to promoting British civil exports. At a time of lower oil prices, the Gulf states' funds are not inexhaustible either, yet arms spending is so enormous that it distorts their budgets. The dollars would be better spent on promoting internal reform — and investing elsewhere for Middle East peace.

Politicians who simply lack beef

Yet again ministers opt for Euroscepticism instead of the facts

CONSERVATIVE Eurosceptics believe they can bring their party together and increase its popularity by standing alone on every available European issue. An increasing proportion of their more pragmatic colleagues, epitomised by John Major, agree with them for the sake of party unity. Labour, anxious not to fight a jingo election in which it is cast as uncritically pro-European, follows in the slipstream of Conservative policy, though at a decent distance. In British politics it has now become axiomatic that it is electorally preferable to be isolated on Europe than to agree with the other member states.

This populist approach is inherently opportunistic. Last year the Eurosceptics seized on the upsurge of anxiety about live animal exports. They eagerly incorporated it into their manifesto of anti-British demands. Building on the hostility which many in this country rightly feel towards the EU's common agricultural policy, the Eurosceptics tried to harness hostility to European harmonisation with the intense anxieties about the meat industry which crystallised in the anti-live exports campaign. It was their moment of highest influence. Their achievement was even embodied in a special section of the British government's European policy white paper published last week.

But what happens when the same populism collides? Yesterday the British government proudly isolated itself on a European agricultural policy issue once again. This time the item was a

plan to continue an eight year-old ban on the use of meat growth hormones, which effectively bars American, Canadian and Australian beef from European markets. Once again our minister stood up for the British way in opposition to Brussels and to his agriculture minister colleagues. The only trouble was that this time — unlike over live exports — Britain is on the wrong side of the argument as far as public opinion is concerned.

Britain's support for the lifting of the ban is based on the belief, reinforced by a Commission-sponsored conference last year, that there is no scientific evidence of human health risk arising from the use of both natural and synthetic hormones. The Man in Whitehall suspects that the scientific arguments accepted by the other member states are a cover for a protectionist policy to benefit the big and influential European beef producers. The other governments say that European consumers, still suspicious after the panic over mad cow disease, will not buy hormone-treated beef anyway. British consumers undoubtedly agree, to judge by the decline in beef sales here. It says a lot about the Conservatives that they are so out of touch. They prefer to heed the theoretical obsessions of the anti-Europeans than the reality of changing consumption patterns. Millions of voters are disgusted with meat industry production methods. Ministers should speak for them; not for the Tory Party's Little England fanatics.

Meet the new chips on the block

And imagine the joy of watching television without the dross

LAST month President Clinton made it mandatory for all future US television sets to have a "V chip" to block violent or explicit films (as classified by a government panel). Parents will have to key in a password to permit such films to be seen. John Major is coming under pressure to do something similar. However, by the time it is ready, the V chip will have been overtaken by a similar chip designed to let parents and others do their own monitoring rather than falling in with what the bureaucrats decide is safe for us to view.

It may not be long before an alphabet of chips is available to make viewing even more pleasurable than it now is. An A chip would automatically switch channels as soon as any advertisements came on and return when they have finished, a B chip would fizzle the screen whenever Baywatch came on, a C chip would switch off with the mention of Charles and Diana and so on. In

such digital delight, an N would cause the set to throw up when News Bunnies came on, an I would censor inane programmes, D would detect the sound of a dart hitting the board, G would send the Good Sex Guide packing (or at least, dressing) while a CO would kill all Carry On repeats. A television set like this with a mind of its own would cut out when Lloyd Grossman reached a new high pitch or when the Girlie Show reached a new low; would switch on when two politicians agreed with each other but to sleep faced with wall-to-wall afternoon pap, anyone with the initials "OJ", sponsored weather, sports superfluity, anything containing the word Chipmunks, serials we weren't in at the start for, and Cell Block H (part 1,234). Such a television set would soon win a Bafta award for liberating us to do all the things people used to do before television came along. If only we could remember them.

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Letters to the Editor

Hear no evil, see no evil

IF THERE is one thing worse than the intrusion on private grief since the Dunblane massacre, it is the moralising pontification of "evil" as a dynamic in human affairs" (Reason eclipsed by evil, March 16).

One of my own sons survived mild molestation by a man in the park 20 years ago and now has no recollection of the incident. I am convinced that this is because, although we talked to him about it, assured him that the molester was wrong to do it, and told him firmly not to do that to strange men in future, no one else reacted. Children need protection and reassurance, not publicity and paranoia.

The biggest danger in the case of Thomas Hamilton is that his suspected paedophilia will be heralded by his murderous final acts and that this may lead to other misdiagnoses and more witch-hunting of "perverts". We need to be able to distinguish between different kinds of crime, rather than to be fed panic about generalised "evil". Name and address supplied.

THE selection of leading thinkers questioned by Henry Forter about evil, idealism and the liberal spectrum, from a pretty narrow range of the liberal spectrum. What do the Neo-Darwinists think about it all? Can mass murder

and genocide be construed as acts of altruism that maximise the chances of survival of one's own genes by eliminating their competitors? Are these genes "selfish", or just blindly idiotic? Perhaps Richard Dawkins can help. Jim Buck, 227 Cemetery Road, Shetfield S11 8FQ.

AS a police sergeant I supervise two constables who investigate the suitability of applicants to possess firearms and shotgun permits. They have, in the past, successfully persuaded the senior officer to revoke permits. However, such a decision is always subject to appeal to the Crown Court. Although hearsay evidence is permitted, some judges are reluctant to admit it or place much weight on it. Some witnesses are unwilling to attend court. In East Hertfordshire, we have over 3,500 permit-holders (shotguns and firearms). Some of these people give me cause for concern, but on the evidence we have I am in little doubt an appeal against revocation would succeed. We cannot refuse a permit because a person is thought of as "odd" or "weird".

(Prof) Phil Scruton, The Hillsborough Project, Centre for Studies in Crime and Social Justice, Edge Hill University College, St Helens Road, Lancs L29 4QP.

THE reporting of Dunblane has been appalling. Noth-

ing has been learnt from the intrusiveness, publication of half-truths and downright fabrication which characterises the immediate aftermath of previous disasters.

Beyond the purple prose and hate-writing of the worst excesses (the simplistic, wise-after-the-event commentaries on "toners", about "evil", about "weird"), you expect something better from the "experts".

Without justification or qualification, Paul Barker's piece (Loner in our midst, March 16) ran together Dunblane and the murder of James Bulger. His reference point for the latter was deeply offensive: "... the threadbare realities of life in the urban wastelands of a city which, even now, is conforming to stereotype (dockers on strike, council rows over budgets)".

Barker doesn't seem to realise that the prolonged dock strike and the council's budget problems are structural manifestations of a long-term decline which has victimised the people of Liverpool. What unites Liverpool and Dunblane is the ease with which ill-conceived media and academic discourses have hijacked their tragedies and their pain.

(Prof) Phil Scruton, The Hillsborough Project, Centre for Studies in Crime and Social Justice, Edge Hill University College, St Helens Road, Lancs L29 4QP.

How very uncivil

THE Council of Civil Service Unions (CCSU) met urgently with officials from the Cabinet Office in response to the changes outlined in yesterday's article "European bar limits Irish in Civil Service, March 18).

We were presented with a fait accompli. There has been no consultation with the unions on these changes which have humiliated Irish and Commonwealth citizens from "reserved posts" in the UK Civil Service as from June 1996. At present, "reserved posts" make up 25 per cent of the half-million-strong Civil Service.

This Nationality Rule change has been presented by officials as a technical amendment which brings the UK into line with European Law. An irony indeed for this Government, which complains vociferously about European decisions most of the time.

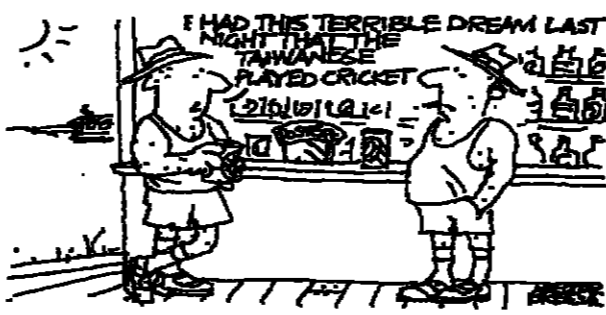
CCSU believes this nationality bar is potentially discriminatory. It legislates against groups of workers who have historically enjoyed the right to apply for any job in the Civil Service on the same basis as UK citizens. It will send a negative signal to Irish and Commonwealth citizens already in post, as well as those who will be unable to apply for the full range of Civil Service jobs in the future.

The CCSU has registered its protest at these changes and will be pressing the Civil Service to reduce the number of "reserved posts" in departments.

In addition, CCSU will continue to work with its constituent unions to oppose discrimination, on whatever grounds, within the civil and public services.

Frances Kilvington, Assistant Secretary, Council of Civil Service Unions, 231 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1SU.

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It's just not cricket, Australia

AUSTRALIA lost fairly and squarely to Sri Lanka in Lahore (Cricket joy for Sri Lanka, March 18). As a repentant Australian, let me recall how umpire Darrel Hair and the Mark Taylor team humiliated Sri Lanka on Boxing Day at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Hair called seven no balls off three overs of Muthiah Muralitharan's bowling. No umpire called Muralitharan for throwing in Lahore and he took one Aussie wicket. Ought the Australian Cricket Board to examine

its use of Australian umpires in international cricket involving the Australian team? Australia also refused to play on Sri Lankan soil because of the LTTE bombing of the Central Bank in Colombo. To be consistent, Australia should now refuse to play on English soil because the IRA are killing innocent people in London.

(Prof) Shelton A Gunaratne, Mass Communications Department, Moorhead State University, Moorhead MN 56563, USA.

Smoke signal

CAMBRIDGE University's press office has just announced that BAT Industries — is to endow a professorship in international relations. In addition, there will be supporting appointments and scholarships. BAT is the second-largest cigarette manufacturer in the world and has a virtual monopoly in many developing countries. It would be a great help if all readers who disapprove of this lethal-drug manufacturer trying to buy respectability would make their views known to the university's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir David Williams.

What BAT and the other tobacco transnationals should be doing with their ill-gotten gains is, first, stopping all promotion of tobacco and sponsoring anywhere but especially in developing countries; and second, diversifying out of tobacco as fast as they can.

(Dr) Peter Draper, 12 Eastwood Road, Muswell Road, London N10 1NL.

Reds and pinks

CONGRATULATIONS to Paddy Ashdown for guaranteeing to end discrimination against lesbians and gay men (Gay soldier saved Ashdown, March 18).

Although your report covered a number of important matters, such as service in the military, it did not mention two other issues which are, I believe, also part of the Liberal Democrat programme, and which particularly relate to young people.

The first is to create a common age of consent for all young people whether they are heterosexual or gay. The second is to repeal the notorious section 28 of the Local Government Act, which makes it more difficult for young homosexual people to receive the information and support they need within the education system.

It is clear that the Tories do not intend to eliminate such discrimination. But where does New Labour stand? (Dr) Michael Black, Gayton Road, Hampstead, London NW3 1TX.

A pension scheme that will always pay off for Labour

YOU state (Labour welfare changes could save up to £1bn, March 15) that the leadership of the Labour Party believes that occupational pension schemes are inflexible and that an alternative vehicle for second-tier pension provision needs to be developed by insurance companies working together with trades unions and employers.

We are extremely surprised at this especially as, in the March issue of the pensions industry magazine, Pensions World, an article by Chris Smith and John Denham states "Labour is keen to extend the coverage of funded second-tier pensions... This means looking for measures to strengthen existing occupational pension schemes and to see how the small but growing trend to establish industry schemes can be encouraged."

Occupational pension schemes are not inflexible. They have adapted to meet the changing employment patterns and to the demands of new regulations. They take many forms, including industry-wide schemes, and are a far more efficient means of

providing for retirement than individual arrangements run by insurance companies.

These messages need to be got across. For example, your report refers to job mobility and the disadvantages of frozen occupational pensions. There is no such thing as a frozen pension, thanks to a requirement that the pensions of job changers must be preserved and must have their real value maintained up to 5 per cent per annum, well above the current rate of inflation.

NAPF would urge the Labour Party to develop policies which would build on the well-proven system of funded occupational pensions. It might start by considering a major simplification of the regulatory system so that employers are further encouraged to provide occupational schemes for their employees.

It is also necessary to simplify the Inland Revenue regulations to encourage more employees to participate. Tom Ross, Chairman, National Assoc. of Pension Funds Ltd., 12-18 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

That big TV fight: round four

I WOULD like to point out to David Elstein (it's a knock-out, March 18) that the BBC has not misled the House of Lords on the issue of sports rights. It is Mr Elstein who is rewriting history.

We have simply questioned the circumstances in which one of last year's major sporting events — The Ryder Cup — was not available, in any form, and we believe we have wide support in striving to find ways of preventing a repetition.

The PGA/BSkyB contract speaks clearly and unambiguously for itself: "For the avoidance of doubt, there will be no BBC transmission of the Ryder Cup." As "Not For Sale" signs go, pretty clear. To nobody's surprise, there was no such BBC transmission. Not a surprise, because all of BSkyB's publicity preceding the event made much, as one would expect, of the exclusive nature of their acquisition, requiring those interested in seeing it to be subscribers to Sky Sports.

This was widely understood publicly at the time, including in the press, who seized upon the controversy surrounding the loss to the general viewing audience.

For Mr Elstein to claim

now, conveniently well after the event, that BSkyB were simply sitting waiting for an offer from the BBC is frankly absurd. I leave your readers rights. It is Mr Elstein who is rewriting history.

We have simply questioned the circumstances in which one of last year's major sporting events — The Ryder Cup — was not available, in any form, and we believe we have wide support in striving to find ways of preventing a repetition.

The reason I was concerned with others about news access for the Bruno fight is that BSkyB did not accede to it until three days before the fight. David Elstein does not seem to understand that the whole point of a BBC available to all and funded by a universal licence fee is that it has a duty to fight for access to events of national significance on behalf of the nation's viewers.

The campaign to persuade the Lords that highlights should be available for terrestrial channels is not being fought to further corporate BBC self-interest. It is on behalf of the 80 per cent of licence-payers who do not have Sky. Steven Barnett, 21 Stamford Road, London N1 4JP.

A Country Diary

CHEESHIRE: A review of moth records in Cheshire during 1995, by Ian Rutherford, the county recorder, appears in the spring issue of the Lancashire and Cheshire Entomological Society newsletter. Reports during the first five months of the year were far from encouraging, with the prospect of 1995 being another poor year for the county. Spring appearances and counts were low, and in some quarters, usually plentiful species were not seen at all — Pale Brindled Beauty and Twin-spot Quaker being two examples notable by their absence from the author's own trap. Once into and through June the weather improved, as did the records, with reports of large catches and a wide range of species which added over 100 new sightings to the 10km square recording base. However, the improvement did not last into the autumn when catches were again widely noted below the normal average. Amongst the successes during the summer was the addition of three

species to the county list — a Silver Hook was taken on moorland in the north of the county, and the same trap produced Lemphes Gold Spot, a moth whose previous absence had long puzzled the reviewer. The third, found in the extreme west, was an Orache Moth, a species extinct as a resident in the UK for more than a century, and today recorded on extremely rare occasions as an immigrant. The Orache was seen in July and another rare immigrant, a Striped Hawk, was reported in early October, but apart from these two, as the review states, "very little else in the moth line to compare with the invasion by Camberwell Beauty Butterflies and Yellow-winged Dart Dragon flies..." As to the most important record of 1995, this was the discovery of a nest of larvae of the Small Regar, a nationally scarce moth whose serious decline is attributed to pollution and the wholesale destruction of our hedgerows. J.M. THOMPSON

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Diary
Joanna Coles

I AM sincerely grateful to the News of the World for at last allowing my friend Darius Guppy — motto Walk With the People but Talk With Kings — to set the record straight. Darius — or D, as Earl Spencer comically calls him (after the Italian mafia boss, of course!) — was cruelly let down when the Daily Mirror suddenly withdrew it recent and, I think you'll agree, derisive offer of £75,000 to write a private life. Last week, however, the NoW was more generous, allowing Darius a full four pages to recount his fascinating tale of prison life which gave us such thoughtful insights as "Prison takes away your privacy" (wasn't it obvious to learn that far from being too drunk to deliver his best man speech at Earl Spencer's wedding — as had been previously reported — Guppy was merely "deep in thought about his audacious £3 million jewellery fraud at the moment simply paid him by. And as for foisting the police with the brilliant scam of hiding £1.4 million worth of gems in the herbeller's of Jaffa Cakes — well, where did that idea come from? Alas, according to Guppy's ex-colleague Peter Risdon, who went to the evidence against him, it came entirely from Guppy's imagination. As did most of the other details Dino gave the paper. Dino exaggerated, surely not. But Risdon insists. And after all, he is a brilliant man, and his so-called "continuity" — that today he is to take his views to the Pds Complaints Commission. Appalled to hear Dino is now planning a book about the crime, Risdon is determined to go further and is poised to sign a book contract himself, to give another, less amorous side of the story. Incidentally, the NoW aims it didn't pay Guppy for the interview. Instead, he had made a donation to the British Diabetes Association. Maybe we're being impatient, but the BDA has yet to receive a bean.

MEANWHILE I am full of admiration for my friend Mandy Manderson, who has had yet another busy weekend — I just don't know how he makes time to get to see all those constituents in Hartlepool, I really don't. On Friday night he gave a winning performance in a reception of Labour sponsors, who had gathered eager to hear him talk about the party's new media centre at Millbank. Come the election, Mandy told the ecstatic crowd, it will be possible to interrupt press conferences anywhere in the country and beam in live appearances from Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and Robin Cook. Strange... But I am sure the omission of John Prescott's good name was but mere oversight.

ON Saturday Mandy was off again, this time to Cambridge, where he addressed the Young Fabians Society, with Roger Liddle, co-author of his delirious, well-written book The Blair Objective — which I was thrilled to see nesting in the bestseller list yesterday number five. Congratulations Mandy! The Fabians were enchanted by both authors and were confused only by the competing array of offers available to purchase the book. I am only glad I did not have to face their central dilemma: should they take advantage of a cheap subscription to the New Statesman, thus ensuring the delivery of the tome for £4.99? Or enjoy Dillons' generous offer of a free glass of wine and a coupon worth £1 redeemable only against purchase?

AND now for the latest whizz from Live TV. My friend Kevin McEneaney has been campaigning tirelessly for scantily-clad weather girls. He plans to select a Norwegian lass who will read the weather report in her native tongue. Only the final words of the forecast will be in English — and they will give a detailed weather report for Nordkjosbotn. Innovative is not the word.

SO in a Brussels butcher's: "British beef. You won't get better."

I THINK THE BALD SPOT'S HAIR IS INTERESTING



Stakeholder needs a self-reliant bedfellow

Commentary
Hugo Young

TONY BLAIR talks about electoral reform as though it were an imponderable experiment. Each time he mentions it, or causes it to be mentioned on his behalf, he makes it sound like an artefact that requires extensive investigation, which he has barely begun, before it can be accurately defined and dated. The party leader comes on like an archaeologist for whom it would be irresponsible to pass even an interim judgment on this mysterious, and possibly dangerous, phenomenon lurking beneath the surface of British politics.

This is a misleading account of the state of the reforming science. I hope Mr Blair doesn't really believe it. For it is hard to think of any speculative project in the whole of politics that is better documented or has been more tenaciously studied than the modalities of electoral reform. Its principles and validity are clear beyond doubt. There are tones of cal-

culatation, shelves-full of quantified debate, about each and every voting system as it might apply to the British body politic on an almost limitless range of assumptions. There is nothing left to find out except how the voters would react to a different voting system if they were offered the opportunity to use one. But that's what no politician knows about any voting system, including the present one.

So Mr Blair should not, in truth, be seen as a mystified scientist in the early stages of inquiry. He is a political man of power who is not yet prepared to accept that the sophisticated measurements already made point in the direction of his party's advantage.

But he is beginning to drop a few hints. This weekend, the line changed. It was authoritatively said on his behalf that reform had its merits, at any rate if confined to the so-called Alternative Vote system, which is the least proportional available but gives the voter the chance to rank candidates in order of preference, thus ensuring that in every constituency the elected MP has attracted support from an absolute majority of participating citizens.

In 1992, assuming the system itself hadn't exercised its own influence on voting patterns, AV would have had small effect. It might have given the Lib Dems 10 more seats, and the Tories 10 fewer. But for Blair to countenance any shift from the present system begins to open up a debate. He himself has yet to utter, and one is assured the laboratory technicians are a long way from concluding definitively that AV is not the political equivalent of Pit-down Man. But the earth is moving, and two consequences beckon.

The first is to make better sense of Labour's entire constitutional project. There is multiple perversity about constitutional reforms which insist on doing nothing about elections. Such conservatism announces a substantial retreat from any visionary desire to shake up the political system and reinvigorate the writing of popular consent. Labour, and Blair more than anyone, is obsessed with the need for renewal in every field. That's the rhetoric that supports Labour's case for constitutional change. It has serious missionary pretensions. But not only would the rejection of electoral reform make this project broken-backed, it would probably imperil its very enactment.

This is because of the second target at which Blair's adjustment must be aimed, namely the Liberal Democrats. To anyone who keeps close to Labour's ideas for constitutional reform it's pretty obvious that the Lib Dems will be indispensable to it. The degree of Labour Party unity behind even the most urgent of its promises, on British devolution, is moot. The chances of a Blair government getting into a terrible mess, either with the party or with Parliament, are better than even. The need, therefore, for solid support from the party that invented this agenda and has been working it over for two decades is obvious. That party, however, has its price: electoral reform. And modest as the attractions are of the AV system, the Blair people's move to publicise their dabbling with it is the beginning of a more serious search for allies.

Personally, I see no reason why this couldn't go much further. Perhaps I fantasise. But the notion of a reform movement built on more explicit understandings between Labour and the Lib

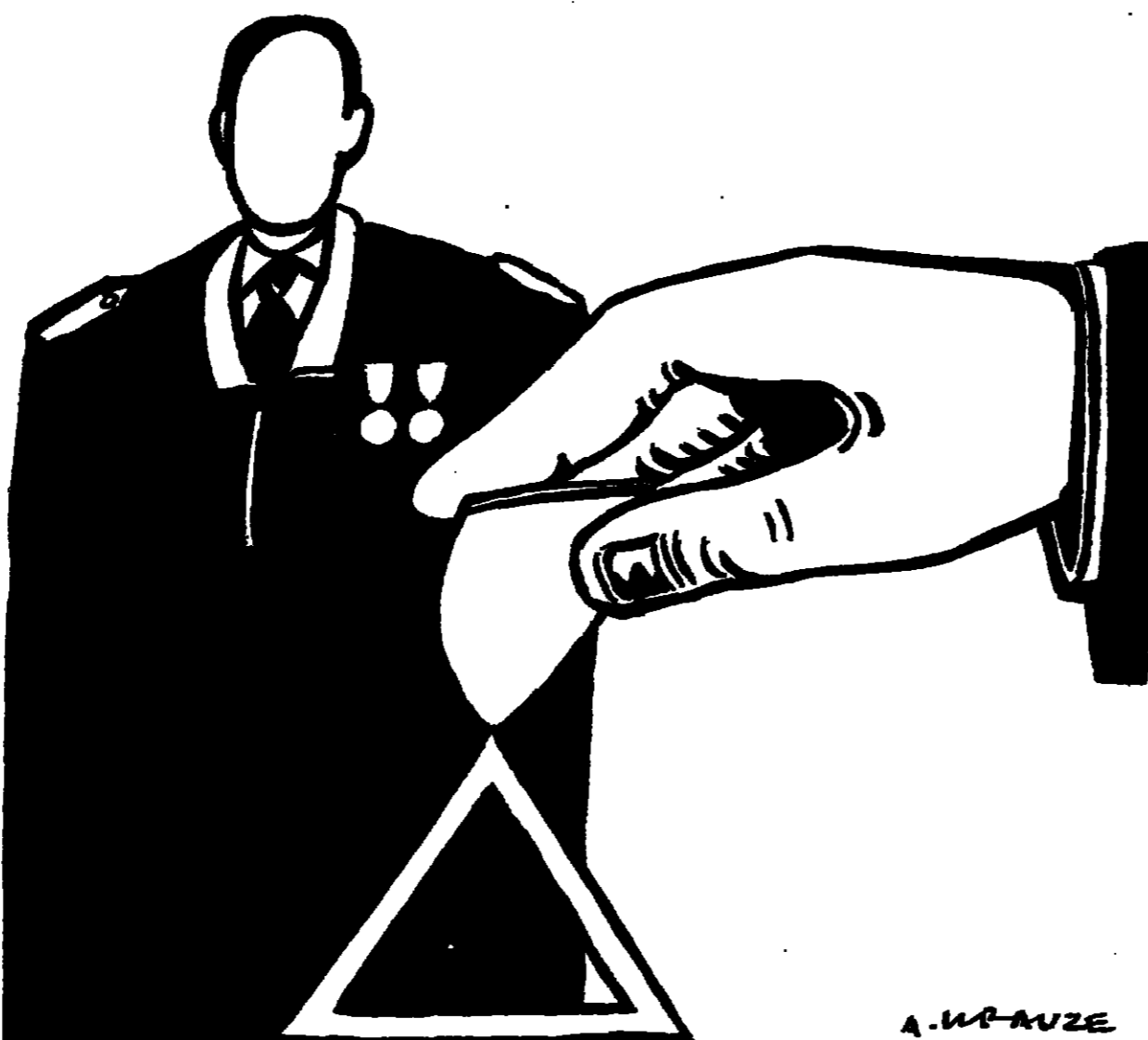
It would begin in privacy but could become an exercise acknowledged to be going on

Dems seems, given the priorities they share, the surest way of seeing these brought to pass. Electoral reform, simultaneously, is by far the soundest guarantee against half-done changes being undone by a new Rightwing Tory government equipped with the sectarian and xenophobic prejudices it is bound to cultivate during a few wilderness years. I see the arrangement of a political alliance between all reform-minded elements as a task worth the serious

attention of both Lab and Lib political leaderships.

For that reason, it was good to see Paddy Ashdown staking out the Lib Dems' own ground at the weekend. His speech was erroneously tagged as anti-Labour. It didn't make a single mention of the Labour Party. All the same, the slogan, comparable with "stakeholding", to which he pinned the Lib Dems was striking. To whom else should "the self-reliant individual" appeal but wavering Tory voters, the kind the Lib Dems risk losing if they get too close to Labour? This was shrewd positioning by Ashdown, more old Liberal than old SDP, just the kind of stuff with which to reassure the ranks when they're faced, as I hope they will be, with the need to engage in the joint politics of political reform.

They will argue, of course, with the AV system. It is only modest tinkering, and has little to do with proportional representation. But system should not be a bar to serious talking. The question now is whether Blair has sent a serious signal. Such is his caution, he may be waiting to see what reaction comes from the weekend flirtations. But I've got no doubt what ought now to happen. Sharing a constitutional agenda which the Tories utterly oppose, Labour and the Lib Dems have nothing to lose by examining how this might be made a joint venture. It would begin in privacy but could become, if the preliminaries were successful, an exercise acknowledged to be going on.



Freedom fighters

Paddy Ashdown says a gay Marine officer who saved his life was 'kicked out of the services'. Liz Campion, herself a lesbian sacked from the Navy, argues that we need a Bill of Rights to protect us whatever our sexual bent

SERVED as a lesbian in the military for six years. I was a lieutenant in the Joint Services Intervention Organisation. I was dismissed for being a lesbian — even though the Ministry of Defence had known of my sexuality for some years. Today I will be giving evidence to the parliamentary select committee dealing with the Armed Forces Bill, which is considering the current ban on lesbians and gay men in the military. I will explain why the ban constitutes legalised discrimination, and legalised invasion of personal privacy. That the law in this country has sanctioned abuses of human rights such as these is of grave concern.

My dismissal is currently the subject of an appeal through the military complaints system. It will then go on, along with those of others, to an industrial tribunal. There it will be argued once again that my treatment, along with theirs, constitutes sexual harassment in breach of the recommendations of Europe's Directive on the Protection of the Dignity of Women and Men at Work, and, as such, breaches the Sex Discrimination Act and

Europe's Equal Treatment Directive. In November 1995 the Appeal Court decided that this European legislation does not apply to us as lesbians and gay men. Equal treatment is only to be afforded to heterosexuals. It is therefore legal to sack someone for being lesbian or gay. This means that, under the British legal system's interpretation of European law, only the most superficial rights to equality exist. Lesbians and gay men will continue to find themselves without the protection of the law.

It is becoming increasingly clear that this is an incorrect interpretation of European law. The Ministry of Defence itself has made aware that it is likely to lose any action in the European Court, where it appears probable it would be forced to rescind its ban. Despite this, the MoD seems intent on persisting with its unjust and unnecessary policy, the only result of which will be prolonged uncertainty for the armed forces and huge expense for the taxpayer.

views of service personnel on the matter. The only tangible reason the ministry produced to support the ban was the prejudice against gay men and lesbians it had claimed to identify with this survey. We are therefore left with a situation where government is prepared to allow the law to protect prejudice rather than its victims.

Would we expect government, having recently also identified racism in the forces, to ban black people in order to deal with the problem? Or would we expect the racism itself to be tackled? Surely all issues of prejudice should be dealt with in the same way.

Currently everybody in Britain is a subject, not a citizen. The battle for lesbians and gay men in the military is part of the wider battle for full citizenship for everybody. This brings with it issues of rights and responsibilities. We want to recognise our responsibilities as members of the whole society, as well as expecting to be allowed to be ourselves within that society. We are asking for our right to serve, but we are also asking to take the responsibility of service.

erosexual and gay service personnel. Under the Stonewall code, sexual conduct would be an offence if it was prejudicial to good order and discipline, undermined command relationships, involved the use of rank or position to obtain sexual favours or constituted an offence under civilian law.

Our campaign asks that actions, not who carries them out, be judged. If it is acceptable to love a woman, it is acceptable to love a lesbian or a gay man. As it is not acceptable to have sex with a child, it is not acceptable whoever does it, heterosexual or gay. Any society which judges an action merely by the person who carries it out cannot be considered just or fair. Everybody is at risk if the law does not respect the privacy, thoughts, conscience, citizenship and service of us all.

The Court of Appeal decided that lesbian and gay people are to be judged entirely differently from other people. As long as you treat lesbians and gay men as badly as each other, you are within the law. This means that it is legal to refuse to employ lesbians, to sack them, or to mistreat them if you do employ them, as long as you do the same to gay men. If it is acceptable for a man to have a sexual relationship with a woman, but a woman can lose her job for exactly the same thing, this has to be direct discrimination on the grounds of gender.

uphold genuine gender equality. This does not only apply to lesbians and gay men in the armed forces. It applies to all lesbians and gay men. All are without protection in law. My employer, the MoD, questioned me about my sex life, questioned my colleagues about my sex life, and circulated documents about my sex life. It is unimaginable that these actions, clearly sexual harassment, would have been tolerated in an employer if the employee in question had been a woman not defined as a lesbian.

The MoD should be obliged to define what it considers places a person outside the protection of the law in this way. How lesbian or gay do you have to be in order to be our service lives? The Minister of the Rolls himself declared that the interrogation and dismissal of lesbian and gay people "would not appear to show much respect for the person's private and family life", yet the law makes no move to uphold our entitlement to that respect. If my private and family life, operating within the law of the land, can nevertheless be legally investigated, invaded and used against me, then everybody's private and family life is at exactly the same risk.

Only a Bill of Rights can grant us freedom as an inalienable possession. Let what is happening to lesbian and gay people in the military serve as a vivid example of what is possible on a larger scale if we do not secure a Bill of Rights for everybody.

Liz Campion, a Royal Navy Lieutenant, is a lesbian, and has been working with Charter 88's Citizens' Enquiry

Why so many rapists walk free



Natasha Walter

MICHAEL HOWARD has robustly defended his proposals for mandatory life sentences for serial rapists. "Do you want rapists freed?" ran a front-page headline in one newspaper as Mr Howard dismissed Lord Taylor's objections to his plans. Well, do you want rapists freed? How many women read the headline and thought: here is a man who shares our intolerance of rape; here is a man who wants to tilt the justice system to the concerns of the victim; here is a man who cares?

Jill Saward, who was brutally raped in the notorious Vicarage case in 1986, has already spoken strongly in favour of the proposal. Her rapists were given sentences of three and five years — shorter than the sentences for the burglary they also committed. "The judiciary are increasingly remote from the fears of ordinary people," she said last week, with vivid personal feeling.

But this undeniable sense of alienation that many rape survivors feel when faced with the justice system will be addressed by mandatory life sentences. Jill Saward has also commented on the huge discrepancy between her own experiences and what was brought out as evidence in the courtroom. The judge — who could have possibly remitted a man to such short sentences because, he said, she had made a good recovery. But she strongly disagreed, and she should know. "What are we meant to do?" she commented later. "Wear a sign? Nobody in the court ever asks how I felt, or asked anybody else how I was."

Her experience is not unique. In new research, to be published next month in Criminal Knowledge (Hamish Hamilton), Professor Sue Lees shows that three-quarters of women whose rape cases went to trial felt distressed, often because they were not allowed to explain fully what happened. And until the experience and words of women who have been raped become more central to the trial, women will continue to feel that the legal process is tilted against the victim.

Is it possible to imagine a system that doesn't so relegate the victim's experience? Currently, once a raped woman has made a statement to the police, that is the end of her involvement until, if the case goes to trial, she is called

as a witness. The intervening process operates without her: the police send her statement to the Crown Prosecution Service; if the CPS proceeds with the case, the solicitor briefs a barrister. The woman has no contact with the barrister, no chance to communicate her trauma or further illuminate salient aspects of the case. She can feel silenced as the trial proceeds. Even barristers defending the accused man often comment with horror on the lack of interest and empathy displayed by the Crown's barristers.

As the barrister Jill Evans sees it, "At the moment the woman can feel used. She is just told to come here and go there, and no one really explains what's going on to her. She is often unable to understand why she can't meet 'her' barrister." Many lawyers are now eager to see the Crown Prosecution Service opening up communication with the victim as it decides whether and how to proceed with the case.

This thoroughgoing reform would also have an effect on the most important outcome of all — not the sentence, but the verdict. As long as the victim's experience is so sidelined and downgraded, the charge — which often stands or falls on the victim's word — tends to fail. The conviction rate in rape cases has dropped alarmingly in the last ten years, from 24 per cent in 1985 to less than 10 per cent today. Michael Howard's bright little idea will do nothing to change that depressing statistic, the real reason why so many rapists walk free.

NDEED, many lawyers believe that mandatory life sentences could have an adverse effect on the rate of conviction. Last week, the Times printed a pointed letter from Helena Kennedy QC, in which she argued that "rapists facing automatic life sentences will have no incentive to plead guilty. They will contest the most clear-cut cases". Similarly, she and other lawyers believe that the prospect of life sentences would make juries even more reluctant to convict.

And others, from the Lord Chief Justice to spokeswomen at Women Against Rape, have argued that mandatory life sentences would make women more vulnerable by increasing the possibility of a murder following a rape. Mr Howard has airily dismissed such fears, arguing that a rapist would not be sufficient "calm and rational" to calculate those risks. Do murderers have to be calm? And if he were wrong, just once, could anyone say that his sparkling political career had been "worth that mistake"? Certainly, Michael Howard is being very canny in using women's real fears to launch his little political campaign. But in using them, he is very far from answering them.

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René Clément

A rare compassion

LIKE many significant post-war directors, René Clément, who has died aged 82, outlived his fame. Yet for a dozen or more years — following his great feature debut *La Bataille du Rail* (1946) — he was arguably the most highly regarded of all French directors, not just within France, but internationally and notably in Italy, the US and Britain.

He was the recipient of numerous major awards, including Oscars and Césars, and enjoyed both critical and commercial success, enabling him to work with leading technicians, writers and actors.

At least a handful of his films, including his semi-documentary debut, the miraculously and timely *Les Jeux Interdits* (1952), the sophisticated sex comedy *Knave of Hearts* (1954) the sombre realist drama *Au-delà des Grilles* (1949) and his stylish version of a Patricia Highsmith Ripley novel, *Plein Soleil* (1958) have stood the test of time, if not fashion. Several others among his relatively sparse output are worthy of note as intriguing, if flawed, co-productions. It was his gradual move to co-production which enlarged his budgets but led to a diminution of personal authority and of his social and political concerns. For the last years of his long life he did not direct, effectively ending his career in 1978.

Clément was born in Bordeaux and studied architecture at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, showing an interest in cinema from his late teens, making an animated short as early as 1931. He entered the movie business proper in 1933 when the director of his father curtailed his studies. He made further short films and became a writer for Jacques Tati, directing him in *Soigne ton Gauche* (1936), which starred the great man as an early manifestation of



Knave of Hearts (1954) ... the sophisticated black comedy, starring Gérard Philippe and Joan Greenwood, was considered his most elegant work

Monsieur Hulot. During the remainder of the decade he travelled widely, made documentaries and shorts including the political *L'Arable Inutile* (1937). During 1939 and 1940 he was in the film-making section of the French Army. Later he made several short works, including *Cæsar du Rail* (1942) and *Chaps de Densair* (1944) until the war's end, when he co-wrote and directed his documentary feature, using mainly non-professional actors.

La Bataille du Rail remains the most important film made in his name, winning him the French resistance. It proved the turning point for Clément, confirming his serious political views, his concern for realism and his obsession with the war. At 32, it made his name, winning him the Best Director award at Cannes where the film also received the Palme d'Or as Best Film.

It ranks with Rossellini's earliest masterpieces *Rome, Open City* and *Paisà*, in its

brutal depiction of the preceding years and if Clément did not eventually rival the great Rossellini for several years he ranked alongside him. It was at this time that Clément, his cameraman Henri Alekan, and co-writer on *Bataille*, Colette Audrey, founded a cine-club which was to develop into I D'E.C. — the powerful French Film School.

In this immediate post-war period Clément worked as technical adviser to Jean Cocteau on *La Belle et la Bête* (1946) and as associate director to Noël-Noël on *Le Fier* (1946). In 1946 he directed a mild clerk who is the leader of a local resistance group. Although a minor work, the subject continued to intrigue Clément and he returned to the resistance — with the unusual aspect of a woman as the central figure — in 1962 with *Le Jour et la Nuit* and, famously, with the massive, *Is Paris Burning?* (1965).

In 1947, Clément directed *Les Maudits* set on board a German U-Boat. Again photo-

graphed by Alekan, it started the director's long-term involvement with bilingual productions. It is a *tour de force*, a tense and claustrophobic study of fugitives and men under pressure — with a background of war.

He moved on to a co-production, *Au-Delà des Grilles* (1949), starring Jean Gabin. Set in post-war Genoa, it tells of the love affair between a French sailor and a Genoan woman. For her role, Isa Miranda was voted Best Actress at Cannes and Clément received Best Director, and the movie later received the Oscar for Best Foreign Film. It is a potent blend of stark realism and film noir.

After *Le Château de Verre* (1950) where he experimented with time, Clément directed his most famous film *Les Jeux Interdits* (1952). Despite comparative unpopularity in France and its rejection by Cannes and the authorities in France, who were disturbed by it, the movie confirmed his international reputation. It

marked a return to location work and tells the story of an orphaned girl who finds temporary refuge — during the second world war — with a peasant family, only to be separated by bureaucracy and the war's end. The film — famous for its haunting guitar music by Yépes — was, for Clément, not about childhood but about the war. It received the Golden Lion at the Venice Festival and the 1952 Oscar, as Best Foreign Film.

After this compassionate work and its concern with ordinary people and victims of war, Clément embarked on his most unlikely project, a Franco-British movie, *Knave of Hearts* (1954). It is a sophisticated black comedy starring his country's greatest romantic actor, Gérard Philippe. He plays a philanderer recounting his past affairs — which have ruined him — to his wife, elegantly played by Valerie Hobson. This witty comedy bears stylish comparison with the more famous *Kind Hearts and Coronets* made five years earlier. Superbly photographed by Oswald Morris and making brilliant use of London locations, it is virtually unknown today and has suffered the indignity of release as *Lovers, Happy Lovers and Lover Boy*.

For his final, solely French production, Clément made his only period film — the fifth screen version of Zola's *L'Assommoir*, set in Montmartre in the 1880s. His obsession with documentary fidelity gives the film a savage intensity, rather let down by the mawkish central performance by Maria Schell — a part which still gained her the Best Actress award and helped make the film a box office success.

After this, Clément worked exclusively on co-productions and less personal projects. However, many critics greatly admire the star-laden *The Sea Wall* (1958), shot in



A strong sense of political commitment ... French film director, René Clément

Thailand, and the re-issue of *Plein Soleil* (1952) confirmed it as a sunny, yet paradoxically noirish version of a Highsmith novel with the 24-year-old Alain Delon devastating as the sexually ambiguous and murderous hero. By now Clément was working with another great cameraman, Henri Decae, from whom he demanded a "liberated camera". Alongside *Knave of Hearts*, this black comedy remains his most elegant work and the last of his truly successful movies.

His remaining eight features achieved less limited release, with the exception of the massive *Is Paris Burning?*, which he directed from a complicated screenplay by a gaggle of writers, including regular collaborators Aur-

enche and Bost, plus Gore Vidal and Francis Coppola. Again concerned with the resistance, it was — at over three hours — a far cry from his lean and raw debut.

Other later movies included *Le Passager de la Pluie* (1964) *La Maison sous les Arbres* (1971) and his last, a co-production entitled *La Baby-Sitter*, after which he retired from active film-making. In 1984 he received an honorary César Award, a sure sign — like the equivalent honorary Oscar — of high regard and the prospect of inactivity. He was highly regarded by those with long cinema memories. He straddled the period dominated by the old (pre-war) guard and found himself pushed to one side by the new wave and an inability for

reluctance) to continue with personal films.

His output of just 19 features is now largely neglected, even by television and the National Film Theatre, where his work as once a mainstay of the repertory. But for those of us who grew to cinema awareness in his heyday, it is impossible to forget his sense of political commitment, a passion for detail and realism and a rare compassion. All unflashy traits today — or perhaps more of an indictment of the 1990s than of Clément.

Brian Sauter

René Clément, film director, born March 18, 1913, died March 17, 1996

Odysseus Elytis

Marvels of nature as a path to truth

ODYSSEUS Elytis, the Greek Nobel prize-winning poet, has died in Athens aged 81. He was the last notable generation of Greek poets, writers and artists known collectively as "The generation of the thirties", which included Greece's other Nobel poet, George Sefaris.

Born Odysseus Alapoudellis in Heraklion, Crete, his family were from Lesbos where his father had set up a soap-manufacturing business. They moved to Athens when Elytis was three. He finished his secondary education in Athens, studying law at the university before abandoning his studies to devote himself to poetry.

An important factor in his poetic development was his meeting and friendship with Andreas Embirikos, the poet and psychiatrist, who was responsible for introducing the Greek public to surrealism. Without ever becoming an orthodox surrealist himself, Elytis was particularly influenced by surrealism's anti-rationalist character and by the emphasis it placed on the senses. This influence is most evident in his first poems published in the literary magazine *Nea Grammatiki* in 1935, under the pseudonym Odysseus Elytis. This pseudonym was carefully chosen with its associations in Greek with the words for hope, freedom, elite, Hellen, Helen, and possibly also Elyard, another source of influence on his early poetry.

His first collections, *Orientalism* (1938) and *Sun the First* (1943) were stimulated rather than influenced by surrealism, and constitute a lyrical metamorphosis of the Greek landscape, particularly of the Aegean. Poems to love,

and an innocent childlike wonderment at the marvels of a nature that was always in Elytis's work, form a path towards truth, not through the intellect but through the senses. In this, Elytis was more a nature philosopher than a nature poet, which perhaps explains his aversion to being characterised, somewhat superficially, as "poet of the Aegean".

The outbreak of the second world war and the subsequent Greek involvement found Elytis fighting on the Albanian front. His experiences of war found their outlet in his long poem, *Heroic and Elegiac Song for the Last Second Lieutenant of the Albanian Campaign*, written in 1943, and much later with the publication in 1959 of his epic poem, *The Axion Esti*.

When the Swedish Academy awarded him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1979, this poem was singled out as "one of 20th-century literature's most concentrated and richly faceted poems". It is a work of incomparable complexity of structure, with perhaps a greater historical and moral awareness than his first poems, yet with no less of the inventive imagery bequeathed to him by Sufism.

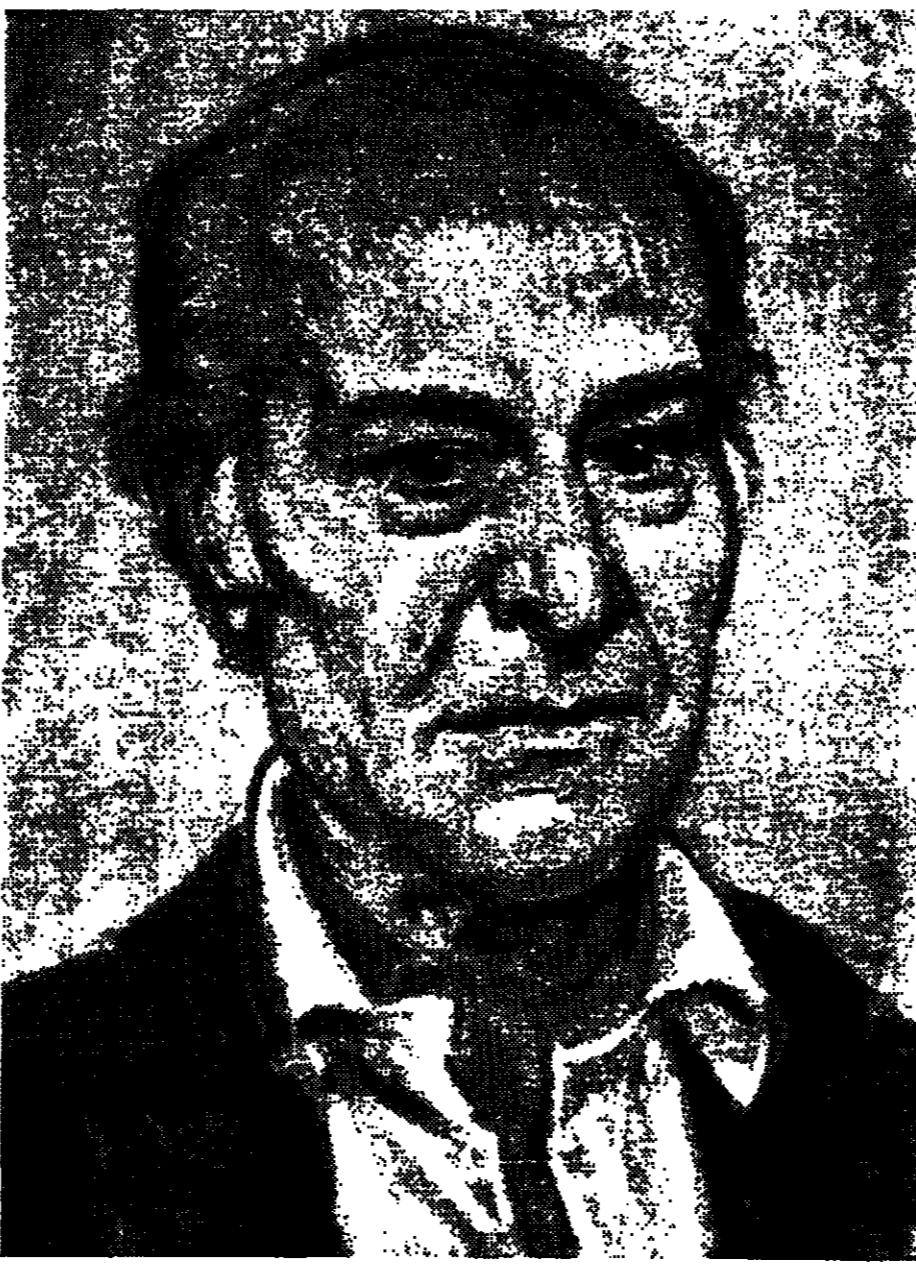
In its three parts, *Genesis, The Passions, and Gloria*, it evokes Greece's heritage and its recent history, and at the same time charts the development of the poet's own sensibility. The poem's popularity was assured when it was set to music by the Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis in the early 1960s. Indeed Elytis's poetry has been well served by popular composers such as Hadjidakis, Marcoupolos and Andriopoulou, whose music has conveyed it to all levels of Greek society.

A third period in Elytis's poetry was marked by the publication in 1971 of *The Light Tree and the Fourteenth Beauty*, two poems which, in ways that had a prominent place in Elytis's poetry, here acquire a metaphysical dimension and enables Elytis to characterise this and subsequent collections in terms of "aesthetical metaphysics". It is in this collection that Elytis comes more concerned with the magical, revelatory function of poetry. The poet's mission, according to Elytis, is to effect a new perception of reality, or, as Shelley put it, "to create the world anew". Elytis, perhaps more than any other Greek poet, has shown a remarkable capacity for development in his work, both thematically and technically. He once again started the literary world in Greece with the publication in 1981 at the age of 80 of *The Oxyptera Elegies*, which a number of critics regard as containing some of his finest and most important poems.

Despite long periods of exile, Elytis published 17 collections of poetry and two large volumes of essays on poets, poetry and literary matters. He also translated numerous works by ancient Greek poets, notably Sappho and Crinagoras, and modern European poets including Lorca, Ungaretti, Eliard and Rimbaud among others. Despite failing health, he never ceased writing and in December 1985, he published a collection of poems entitled *West of Sorraia* and a book of prose writings, *The Garden of Self-Delusions*.

Financial independence, thanks to the family business, enabled Elytis to devote himself throughout his life to his literary work. He travelled extensively, living for long periods during the post-war years and the years of the dictatorship in France, where he associated with leading poets and artists of his generation such as Breton, Eluard, Jouve, Char, Ungaretti, Matisse, Chagall, Giacometti and Picasso. For the last 30 years, he lived simply in a small two-room apartment in the centre of Athens together with his few cherished books. He was fortunate in having the devoted companionship of Ioulita Hlogopoulou in his later years, when confined to his apartment where he continued to work and write and where he was to die of heart failure.

In January this year, the Hellenic Foundation for Culture in London celebrated Elytis's work with an evening devoted to his poetry and that of William Blake, whom Ely-



Nobel Prize winner ... Greek poet Elytis in a portrait by Yannis Moralis

is particularly admired. *The Oxyptera Elegies* is shortly to be published in a bilingual edition by Harwood Academic Press.

David Connolly

Edmund Keeley writes: I met Elytis when I was first discovering the pleasures of Modern Greek poetry in 1951, while writing a D Phil dissertation at Oxford and translating his early poetry along with that of Cavafy and Sefaris. I was much taken by Elytis's joyful evocation of the Aegean world in his free-wheeling verse, and when I began translating it initially for my own enjoyment, he was helpful in suggesting ways of rendering his sometimes surrealist imagery into English by way of French analogies, his knowledge of English being strictly limited.

I discovered that in those days his vision of the Aegean was sustained almost entirely by his imagination, since he rarely travelled beyond his home in the Kolonaki section of Athens. His

friend, the poet and lyricist, Nikos Gatsos, used to kid him about his lack of enthusiasm for getting his feet on to sandy shores and immersing himself in the blue waters that his poetry so ardently celebrated. Eventually, he regularly spent his summers on the island of Aegina, but in general, he was reticent about travel, and during his one trip to the United States some years after I met him, he found any number of excuses for staying in New York City and receiving visitors in his hotel. The one time I walked the streets of New York in his company, I remember him expressing his alarm at the "underworld effect" of steam rising up through gratings in the pavement.

During a later period, when George Savidis and I were translating his major work, *The Axion Esti*, Elytis was again very helpful in providing some access to his more obscure images and allusions. I remember his saying at one point, when I pressed him to tell me the botanical identity of some of

the plants and flowers offered in the poem: "How do I know? I'm not a botanist. I chose those plants and flowers for the sound of their names. So when you translate them, you do the same." Elytis had been silent for more than a decade before the publication in 1961 of that long, three-part poem, and he had great faith in its qualities despite the initial, rather lukewarm response of some of his literary friends. Time has borne him out: the poem is still regarded as the high point of his poetic career. On the other hand, in his late years he became rather sarcastic about some of his finest early verse, calling it "touristic" and he was especially critical of what is perhaps his best known early poem, *The Mad Pomegranate Tree*, which in fact still remains among his most popular celebrations of the light-rich landscape and hedonistic spirit of contemporary Greece.

Odysseus Elytis (Alapoudellis), poet, born November 2, 1911; died March 18, 1996

Dewi Bebb

Modest flyer for the glory of Wales

DEWI BEBB, who has died of cancer at the age of 57, was one of the greatest wing three-quarters produced by Wales but he only took up rugby by accident. He came from north Wales, a soccer heartland, and his school did not have rugby on its curriculum until Bebb was in the sixth form. But within three years, he was making his debut against England when he scored the only try of the game. Bebb scored six of his 11 tries for Wales against England.

His father, W Ambrose Bebb, was a lecturer who had been closely involved with the nationalist party Plaid Cymru since it began in the 1920s and he edited its newspaper, *Y Ddraig Goch*. When he retired from rugby, Bebb, too, moved into journalism and presented the Welsh magazine programme *Y Dydd* before becoming news director of ITV.

Bebb was only the third North Wales Schools' player to win his senior cap after Wilfred Wooller and Bledwyn Williams, and when he was chosen to play against England in 1959, he had only made two appearances for his club Swansea.

Bebb was one of the fastest players in the game having run 100 yards in 9.9 seconds, but he played in an era when backs had few chances and when it was rare for an international team to reach double figures. His attitude was that if the ball was not going to come to him, he was going to find it.

The approach served him well, not least in his debut when he picked up a rebound from an England throw-in at a line-out and, in his own words: "I just set off. Before I knew it, I had crossed the line. The funny thing was that there was this complete silence for two or three seconds. I could not understand it. Then, suddenly, there was this huge roar from 60,000 people." Wales won 5-0.

The selection of Bebb on the left wing had been the talk of Welsh rugby because of his inexperience. It was a position where Wales had made

nine changes in 11 matches, but Bebb then made 18 consecutive appearances and won 34 caps until his final game against England in 1957 when he marked his departure with another try.

Gareth Edwards remembered Bebb for his humility: "He was a player of exceptional ability but he was a modest man. I cannot remember anyone saying a bad word about him."

Bebb toured with the British and Irish Lions to South Africa in 1962 and to Australia and New Zealand four years later when he finished as the top try scorer with 11. Cardiff City Council had refused him leave of absence to make the 1962 tour but he went and wrote his letter of resignation on the way. On his return, he moved into journalism.

David Plummer

Dewi Iorwerth Ellis Bebb, rugby international and journalist, born August 7, 1938; died March 14, 1996

Death Notices

CRISP, Pearl died peacefully on 12th of March 1996 at Kings Lodge Hospital after a long illness. Buried at Llanarth Major Crematorium. Pearl will be missed by her husband Ken, family and many friends.

NEEL, David Angus, On March 14th 1996 of Debary Manchester severely as a loved one of an accident aged 29 years. Much loved son of Gordon and Betty. A dear brother of Ian Family hours only by request. Donations of flowers to the Institute of Performing Arts, 101 Street Liverpool. Donations of flowers to the Institute of Performing Arts, 101 Street Liverpool. Donations of flowers to the Institute of Performing Arts, 101 Street Liverpool.

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SOLARI, Frank left us peacefully on the 15th of March at Mulberry House, 105, The Avenue, Bournemouth. He was 85 years old. He was a member of the Bournemouth and District Football Club. He was a member of the Bournemouth and District Football Club. He was a member of the Bournemouth and District Football Club.

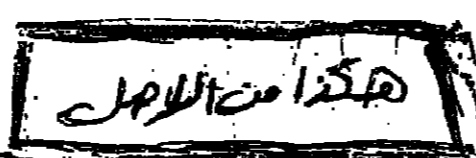
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Birthdays

Ursula Andress, actress, 60; Ornette Coleman, jazz saxophonist, 66; Peter Cotes, actor, director, 84; Patrick McGovern, actor, 68; Paul Marland, Conservative MP, 55; Lord Plant of Highfield, Professor of Politics, Southampton University, 51; Philip Roth, novelist, 63; Brian Rust, discographer, 74; Mary Wimbrush, actress, 72

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FinanceGuardian

Unelected quangos spend £13bn every year, calculates Prescott

Labour will give clout to regions

Rebecca Smithers
Political Correspondent

LABOUR will this week announce radical plans to decentralise regional economic decision-making away from Whitehall to speed up regeneration in Britain's poorest areas, in the first taste of the contents of a regional policy document due later in the spring.

In speeches to a Manchester conference on Friday, Labour's deputy leader, John Prescott, and shadow home secretary, Jack Straw, will stress the need to link economic regeneration with democratically accountable regional government to create jobs and improve living standards.

They will attack Conservative regional policy, as having been characterised by a shift away from locally elected councillors and into the hands of Whitehall and appointed quangos.

Mr Prescott calculates that around £13 billion every year is spent by unelected bodies on public economic investment, and wants to get economic regeneration under way in the first year of a Labour government by devolving responsibility, initially to economic development agencies set up along the lines of those already operating in Scotland and Wales.

In England and Wales they would be organised to reflect regional boundaries, and would bring public and private partnerships together. They would be expected eventually to be absorbed into regional chambers of elected councillors — and ultimately regional assemblies.

Mr Prescott will set out the scale of the need for economic regeneration, blaming Conservative policies for leaving Britain in a northern Europe. A new analysis of the Government's rules for aid to the poorest areas will show that if the criteria in force in the 1960s were applied today, only

two areas would fail to qualify. Ciltreco, Lancashire, and Winchester and Eastleigh, Hampshire are the only parts of Britain enjoying better economic conditions than the qualifying criteria for assisted area status in 1966, when unemployment in the assisted areas averaged 3.3 per cent.

Mr Prescott will tell the conference: "This is a depressing illustration of the extent to which unemployment and economic failure are simply accepted by this government as beyond remedy. Whole areas have been written off."

His commitment will underline one of the little-publicised themes of Labour leader Tony Blair's "power to the people" John Smith memorial lecture last month, which argued for democratically accountable regional government.

More detailed proposals are expected to be set out in the formal report of Labour's Regional Policy Commission, headed by Bruce Millan, former European commissioner on regional policy.

The document is expected to recommend stronger support for small and medium-sized businesses, and more regional sector involvement in public sector projects.

The details of Labour's position come after growing dissatisfaction among Britain's chambers of commerce with regional policy, and their complaints that the rise of appointed bodies and the curbing of local authorities have undermined local accountability and responsiveness.

A meeting of the chambers' national council today will formally debate proposals for regional forums, which have been explored by a working group.

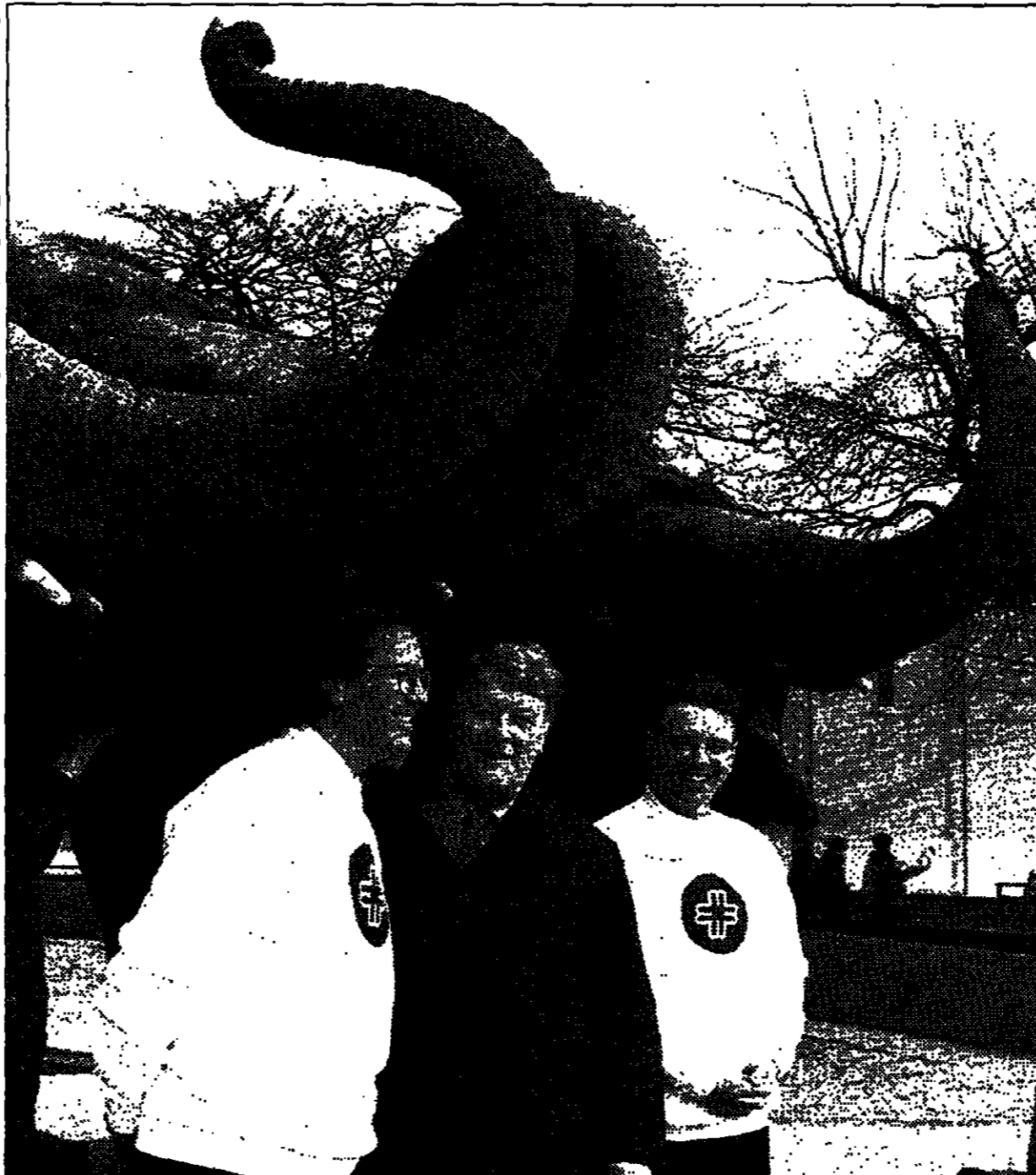
These would be organised along European lines and have representatives nominated by the constituencies of regional chambers of elected councillors — and ultimately regional assemblies.

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scheme and a medium term share incentive scheme. The latter entitles 44 BET executives to incentives worth a total of £9,622,257. According to the company's defence document, senior staff would still pick up incentives packages if the company is taken over.

Rentokil wants clarification on the nature of an "index-related performance target" on which the share deals are apparently based.

BET last night insisted that all details of its top management incentive packages had been made public. But Rentokil chairman, Clive Thompson, is understood to be determined to reduce payouts to departing BET management to the lowest possible figure.



MULTIMEDIA Corporation turned to London Zoo for an image of its financial performance in 1995. The management team of

left to right, director Ed Miller, chairman Duncan Thomas and managing director Ciaran Doyle reported a profit of

£123,198 — against the previous year's £94,015 loss — after a 51 per cent rise in turnover. The company went public

last July and its latest CD-ROM title, The Wide World of Animals, is launched in Britain on Friday. PHOTOGRAPH BY HAMILTON WEST

Blow for Clarke's tax-cut hopes

Larry Elliott
Economics Editor

CONSERVATIVE plans for a vote-winning giveaway Budget in November were being called into question last night after official figures showed state borrowing on course to top £30 billion this year.

City analysts said the recent slowdown in the economy had left Chancellor Kenneth Clarke with little hope of hitting his £29 billion forecast for the public sector borrowing requirement this year.

They predicted that Mr Clarke — who has twice revised his forecast upwards in the past year — would miss his target by at least £3 billion.

That would leave the PSBR above £30 billion for the fourth year in a row and have knock-on effects for the next financial year, when the size of the Government's projected borrowing will be crucial in assessing the scope for tax cuts.

Treasury economists have already started outlining planning for November's package. In the 1994 Budget, Mr Clarke estimated the Government would need to borrow £21.5 billion to cover the gap between its spending and income in 1995/96. That was amended to £23.5 billion last summer and £29 billion in November. Mr Clarke will use any improvement in the

PSBR to justify tax cuts in November, but analysts said last night that a combination of sluggish consumer demand and the expansion of part-time jobs meant this movement was much slower than hoped for.

The Treasury's compilation of forecasts from City and academic economists shows that the consensus for next year is more than £2 billion above Mr Clarke's budget forecast of £22.5 billion.

Yesterday's figures were influenced by the proceeds from privatisations. The second call on the Genco2 power generators offer, sales of electricity debentures and BAA shares meant that the PSBR for February stood at

£2,951 billion, slightly less than the City expected. However, excluding state sell-offs, the PSBR last month was £4.4 billion, only slightly down on the comparable £5.1 billion in February 1995.

For the first 11 months of the 1995/96 financial year, the PSBR, excluding privatisation, was £25 billion, down from £30.4 billion last year, including privatisations, the total has been reduced from £25.9 billion to £22.2 billion.

Alex Garrard, economist at City firm UBS, said March would see the traditional "scramble" by government departments to exhaust their budgets, adding that the PSBR for the whole year was likely to be £33.5 billion.

Sterling spared from ERM re-entry

John Palmer in Brussels

THE pound will not have to rejoin the European exchange rate mechanism as a precondition for taking part in the move to a single currency in 1999.

Although the Maastricht treaty still speaks of two years' membership of the ERM as a precondition for joining the single currency, EU governments have, in effect, waived this not only for Britain but also for Finland and Sweden, which want to take part in monetary union.

However, even if Britain does not join, pressure on London to formalise sterling's links with the ERM after 1999 will increase as a result of a study being finalised by EU finance ministry and central bank officials.

The report, which will be presented to an informal meeting of EU finance ministers in Verona next month, says that even those countries which remain outside the single-currency bloc in 1999 should be required to target their exchange rates more closely on the Euro.

For legal reasons the European Commission is reluctant to acknowledge formally that prior membership of the ERM has been dropped as a condition for admission to the single currency in 1999.

Asked about this, the commission said: "It is a matter for [EU] heads of government to interpret the treaty's requirements when the time comes early in 1998 to make the judgment about who qualifies and who does not."

But senior sources within the commission and the key EU monetary committee confirm that formal ERM membership is no longer regarded as a condition, although having a track record on currency stability still is.

"At present sterling is not part of the ERM nor is it bound by the looser, 15 per cent margins, which were agreed after the currency crisis in 1993," a senior commission official pointed out yesterday. "But if the pound can show its present very limited fluctuation rate against the other EU currencies in 1998, this will count more than whether the pound is in the system itself."

Contrary to the claims of Tory Eurosceptics, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Kenneth Clarke, has insisted that sterling does not have to rejoin the ERM membership for the UK to qualify to join the single currency.

If the ERM condition did apply, the British government would have to join the mechanism this month to keep open its option of participating in monetary union in 1999.

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Notebook

Why carp about Lord Weinstock?



Edited by Alex Brummer

THE recent bounce in the share price of GEC has been widely attributed to settlement of the Weinstock succession issue, which has been a pre-occupation for the City.

Now that the white smoke has gone up from Stanhope Gate, with the mantle passing to George Simpson de Lucas, there are new complaints. Some City sources argue that the transfer will take too long; others complain that as emeritus chairman Lord Weinstock will not be able to keep his hands out of GEC's affairs and others would like to see a strong, independent chairman in place to succeed Lord Prior before making a formal judgment about the future.

Much of this is, of course, nonsense. In a group like GEC, where large contracts in power and defence are such a crucial part of the business, Weinstock's continuing role is of critical significance as the group structures are modernised. Moreover, the City would do well to dwell on Weinstock's contribution to Britain's place in global electrical businesses before marking his departure so uncharitably.

In fact it is just as likely that the revival in GEC's share price may have as much to do with its emergence as the likely supplier of an advanced new missile, the British equivalent of the Tomahawk, to the United Arab Emirates, as to management changes.

If the GEC missile deal goes ahead — it could eventually be worth up to \$5 billion to UK arms exporters — it will be one of the most important contracts since the Saudi Arabian oil Yamamah deal. If the hitches can be resolved, the new contract would cascade through the UK defence/electronics industry creating thousands of jobs among dozens of sub-contractors. It would be a useful endorsement for GEC before Lord Weinstock ratchets down his role.

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for 12 months after the announcement. But this exception been in place when the National & Provincial first explored a merger with Nationwide or Alliance & Leicester, it might have been possible to freeze out the Abbey National, which jumped into the race carrying sackfuls of cash bribes to members.

However, the Treasury has still chosen to ignore the heavy lobbying from the building societies for a firmer two-year rule, under which the only people to qualify for cash payouts would be those who have held accounts for two years prior to the end of the financial year. Instead, it proposes "possible" action to freeze out the Abbey National, which jumped into the race carrying sackfuls of cash bribes to members.

For the consumer, the new bill would also contain a number of useful protections. Most significantly, all those with building society accounts would qualify as members, not just certain types of accounts. This caused great frustration for disqualified account holders in the the Lloyds takeover of the Chelsea and the merger of the Halifax/Leeds merger.

Finally, the Government appears ready to halt the conversion juggernaut but its response has been pathetically slow and inadequate.

Taxing timetable

AT the time, last year's Budget was seen as a bit of a damp squib, particularly by Conservative MPs fearful of losing their seats. The feeling at Westminster was that £3 billion of tax cuts were merely an appetiser for the real pre-election giveaway in November 1996.

Several months down the road, the fiscal arithmetic is not looking good for Mr Clarke. The Public Sector Borrowing Requirement for the real pre-election giveaway in November 1996.

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Rentokil attack on BET chiefs' incentives deal

Patrick Donovan
City Editor

RENTOKIL is stepping up the pressure in its £1.8 billion takeover bid for BET by asking the Takeover Panel to arbitrate on whether the terms of share incentive packages offered to the bid target's top management conform to City rules on mergers and acquisitions.

Rentokil, the company with interests from pest control to industrial services, is understood to be asking for a panel judgment because of difficulties working out how much compensation BET directors would be entitled to if the takeover offer succeeds.

Rentokil thinks the BET incentives may infringe Rule 25 of the City "Blue Book" on takeovers, which requires disclosure of performance-related packages.

The appeal for arbitration comes in the wake of claims that BET's chief executive, John Clark, could pick up £5 million if the Rentokil bid gives through.

Rentokil is understood to have three worries. First, the bidder wants clarification about the "financial targets" that would entitle Mr Clark to a bonus of up to 60 per cent of his salary.

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Sega to open £45m 'virtual reality' theme park in London

Nicholas Bannister
Technology Editor

SEGA WORLD, a £45 million theme park offering a cross between traditional rides and glorified computer games, will open in August near Piccadilly Circus in London.

Sega, the Japanese video game company, is using electronics to compress the park into a 110,000 sq ft site. Its aim is to let visitors experience the thrills of the theme park ride and the interactive special effects of computer games while seated in a building at the heart of the capital.

There will be six main rides — Beast in Darkness, Space Mission, Aqua Planet, Ghost Hunt, Mad Bazooka, and ASI Simulator — with attractions such as motor racing and an electronic version of an American fairground.

All will be packed into part of the Trocadero, the former 19th-century music and dance hall now converted into a shopping and entertainment complex.

Sega said visitors would experience rides in which the environment was created by computer-generated images. Customers wearing virtual-reality headsets or watching screens will have the impression that they are, for example, moving underwater, creeping through haunted houses, or crashing around on dodgers.

Computer technology will make it possible, for example, for fellow travellers on the Space Mission to appear to each other to be wearing space suits, even though they may actually be dressed in jeans.

James Bidwell, head of marketing for Sega Amusements Europe, expects to attract about 1.75 million people a year, each paying an entry fee of between £10 and £15, with lower rates for children and groups.

Segaworld will take up about a fifth of the Trocadero site. Sega chose the site for its first electronic theme park outside Japan because of its central location and proximity to Piccadilly Circus.

"Office workers may even opt for an evening at Segaworld rather than go to the pub after work," Mr Bidwell said optimistically.

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Pearson expansion fails to feed through into profits

Lisa Buckingham

PEARSON, whose interests range from the Financial Times and Penguin Books to Madame Tussaud's and Thames TV, yesterday reported a 23 per cent rise in profits to £365 million — figures flattered by a windfall of £131 million from the sale of its stake in satellite broadcaster BSkyB.

Despite a headline profits record and a 10 per cent increase in the dividend to 16.5p a share, many of Pearson's key businesses suffered substantial set-backs.

Operating profits — before one-off items — dropped by 5 per cent to £286 million, following a poorer performance from a majority of the group's divisions.

Although profits from the information division rose by 24 per cent to £105.3 million,

this was largely because of a full year's contribution from the Spanish group Recoletas. The education operation — largely Addison Wesley — suffered a "bruising" 38 per cent fall to £31.8 million.

Despite a tripling of television profits from Thames TV and Grundy, the entertainment division managed to end the day 14 per cent down at £110.9 million. Mindscape, the hi-tech CD-ROM-based group for which Pearson paid more than £300 million, took a bath and turned in losses of £7 million.

Pearson retains a large stake in the merchant bank, Lazard, which contributed nearly £40 million of profits thanks to the takeover boom on both sides of the Atlantic.

The figures added to doubts about Pearson's talent for acquisitions outside its core area. The company spent £540 million on takeovers last year.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 1.92	France 7.46	Italy 2.325	Singapore 2.11
Austria 15.20	Germany 2.1900	Malta 0.5400	South Africa 5.82
Belgium 44.75	Greece 353.00	Netherlands 2.4250	Spain 165.50
Canada 2.0250	Hong Kong 11.81	New Zealand 2.20	Sweden 10.17
Cyprus 0.70	India 52.31	Norway 9.56	Switzerland 1.7500
Denmark 8.46	Ireland 0.6500	Portugal 227.00	Turkey 96.791
Finland 6.98	Israel 4.71	Saudi Arabia 5.80	USA 1.4925

Supplied by Guinness Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel)

12 FINANCE AND ECONOMICS

Pauline Springett and Paul Murphy on the Lucas chief named to succeed Weinstock



Still around... outgoing GEC managing director Lord Weinstock is likely to maintain his influence in the company he created
PHOTOGRAPH: ASHLEY ASHWOOD

White smoke rises at GEC

GEC ended months of intense speculation yesterday by confirming that George Simpson, chief executive of Lucas Industries, would succeed Lord Weinstock as managing director.

In a typically brief statement, GEC said Mr Simpson would join the company as soon as he was free. Lord Weinstock, head of GEC for 33 years, would then retire from the board to take up an honorary position as "chairman emeritus" so he could provide "the benefit of his long experience and profound knowledge of the company". The handover is likely to be in the autumn.

Newlands and divisional chiefs Peter Gersbon and Jim Cronin — were also tipped at one stage, but it has been clear for several months that GEC would have to opt for an external candidate.

Mr Lucas, a Scottish accountant by training, joined Lucas two years ago from British Aerospace. He is respected in the City for negotiating the sale of the car manufacturer Rover to Germany's BMW at a good price.

At Lucas, which produces motor components and aerospace engineering, Mr Simpson is regarded as having a good grip of the business and of having made a promising start of refocusing its strategy. However, his move to GEC comes before the task at Lucas, which is due to report its half-year results today, is expected to find a new chief executive by the time it reports its full-year results in early October.

City analysts reacted cautiously to the appointment. "Simpson is well respected, but, yes, we have noted Lord Weinstock's continuing role," said one specialist.

"The market is apathetic. It has been expected for a long time and it will also be a good while before we see any effect."

Industry sources said that GEC would now embark on a fresh succession search — this time for a replacement for the chairman, Lord Prior.

Meanwhile, GEC moved to distance itself from yesterday's report in this newspaper that it was on the brink of securing a multi-billion-pound contract to supply a missile system to the United Arab Emirates.

"We are not saying anything about what we are in the process of selling. We do not say anything until it is actually sold. We are a conservative company," a spokesman said.

However, sources at the defence contractor indicated that any delay in securing a large order from the UAE could be blamed on slowness in forging a planned military treaty between Britain and the Gulf states.

Defence industry observers speculated that any armaments package sold to the UAE would include a long-expected order for Tornado fighter aircraft from British Aerospace as well as the GEC missile system.

Chronology

- 1949 — Arnold Weinstock joins family electronics firm, Radio & Allied Industries
- 1951 — Company acquired by General Electric Company
- 1953 — Weinstock becomes managing director
- 1957 — GEC merges with Associated Electric Industries
- 1958 — Merger with English Electric
- 1958 — Buys Yarrow Shipbuilders
- 1958 — Merges telecoms interests with Plessey in GPT
- 1959 — Sets up joint ventures with French power system company Alstom and GE of the US. Joint takeover of Plessey with Siemens approved by Monopolies Commission
- 1959 — Abandons talks to buy Thorn-EMI defence interests; instead merger talks with BAE
- 1959 — Buys Ferranti's defence business
- 1959 — Acquires VSEL Trident submarine yard

Some analysts believe the new boss is almost certain to take another tilt at this elusive prize.

Other observers say BAE may be off the agenda. "If Lord Weinstock had really wanted BAE, he would have got it," said one analyst.

Of more immediate interest will be Mr Simpson's joint venture strategy. GEC already has ventures with Siemens of Germany, Alstom of France and General Electric of the US. The French and US deals work well but the Siemens link is more problematic.

Siemens and GEC joined forces in the late 1980s to buy Plessey. The spat has been that GEC's independent role in the European telecommunications market is severely restricted.

Mr Simpson, an astute deal-maker, is likely to be keen on fresh joint ventures. That could hasten the restructuring of the company into a fistful of joint venture businesses with foreign partners and, in turn, to demerger.

The City is hoping for a quickening of the pulse at GEC. "It needs to be energised. It's become far too staid and unimaginative in its policies," said one fund manager.

Simpson's hand on cheque book

Outlook

THE succession struggle at GEC is over. Lord Weinstock, after 33 years at the helm of Britain's biggest defence contractor, will be succeeded by George Simpson of Lucas.

Despite GEC's culture of secrecy, the announcement was well flagged. It was clear last weekend that Mr Simpson was heading for GEC, leaving the question of what the appointment would mean for the company — and Lord Weinstock's own continuing role.

Topping the list of tasks for the new managing director will be deciding what, if anything, to do with the company's £2.5 billion cash pile. Lord Weinstock, credited with transforming GEC from a small electrical business into a world leader in defence and engineering, attracted sharp criticism from City analysts who believed the cash should have been put to work.

The critics are hoping Mr Simpson will be their man. As one fund manager with a sizeable holding of GEC stock said yesterday: "I'm announcing a 21 per cent rise in my share price with GEC shares. If I did I'd buy bank shares."

The mountain of money cannot simply be spent. One analyst said: "There's not much point in spending the cash for the sake of it. You've got to use it wisely. It's jolly difficult to spend it in the markets in which GEC operates."

Lord Weinstock's defend-

ers say that GEC's business by its very nature requires the company to maintain a substantial cushion of cash because of the size of government contracts and the amounts of company funds put at risk.

If Mr Simpson does decide to write a few cheques, one option could be to try to nail down a merger with arch rival British Aerospace. Lord Weinstock has unsuccessfully pursued this for several years, arguing that the UK defence industry would operate more efficiently by having one prime contractor.

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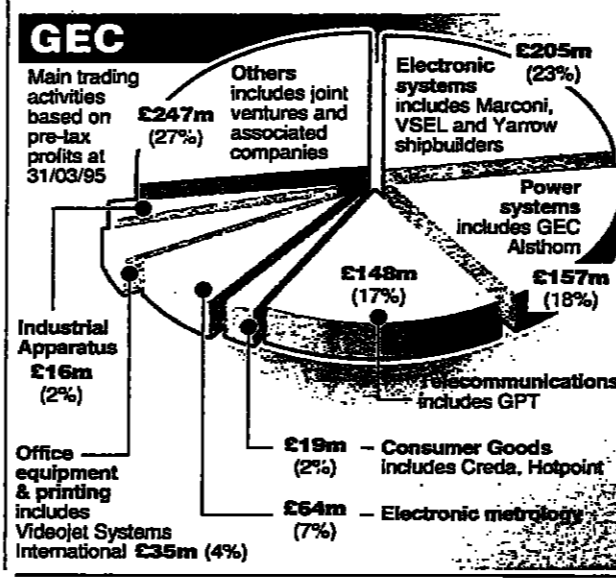
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Predators are warned off building society bids

Jill Papworth on mutuals' defence

BUILDING societies with firm plans to merge may be ring-fenced from hostile bids by banks for up to a year under Government proposals outlined yesterday.

The idea of giving societies a "quiet period" to consult their members without counterbids taking place was contained in a proposed adjunct to the Government's draft bill on the future of building societies announced yesterday.

Treasury minister Angela Knight said building societies who wanted to retain mutual status and merge with other societies felt constrained from announcing such plans for fear of attracting unwelcome predators.

"Where a merger is in the best interests of members, societies should feel able to get on and pursue proposals," Mrs Knight said. "They should not face potential unwelcome disruption from an outside bid while the merger is being processed."

The idea will be subject to a three-month consultation period.

Mrs Knight also proposed that where a society's members reject a takeover bid, the bidder should not be able to mount a repeat bid for a year.

Abbey National, which converted from a building society to a bank and was listed by the Stock Exchange in 1986, said the Government proposal to block hostile takeovers of building societies was the first step towards a fully-fledged takeover code needed by the mutually owned sector. But analysts questioned how far it would actually protect society members.

"If two building societies announced plans for a merger, how are members supposed to know if they're getting a good deal?" asked one analyst. "Under this rule they wouldn't be allowed to know if one of the banks was waiting in the wings with a better deal that they weren't allowed to bring to the table."

Brian Davis, chief executive of the Nationwide society, said the proposal was fine in theory but would not work. It would be difficult to legislate against quoted compa-

nies declaring an informal interest in buying a society.

There could be a temptation for large societies to persuade smaller ones to merge with them purely to get a year's protection from predators.

Mr Davis said he preferred a strengthened two-year rule to prevent recently-joined investing members of a society getting payouts in the form of shares if a society demutualises.

At present banks and other quoted predators are able to "buy the votes of short-term investors," Mr Davis said.

He joined the Building Societies Association and others in calling on the Government to redraft the two-year rule. Labour's City spokesman Alistair Darling warned of an urgent need to get legislation on the statute book.

"The Government has taken far too long to publish even a draft bill, which is unlikely to be introduced before the autumn," he said.

"As the next parliamentary session will be cut short by the general election, it is possible that the bill will not get on to the statute book before 1996. That means continued uncertainty, with building societies fighting in a difficult market with one hand tied behind their back."

"The Government must act now to preserve building societies in the future."

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Bill will...

- Allow building societies to broaden activities so long as principal purpose remains provision of residential mortgages
- Extend voting rights to virtually all savers
- Give borrowers broadly some voting rights as savers
- Allow continental banks to buy societies
- Extend jurisdiction of Building Societies Ombudsman and widen powers of Building Societies Commission

News in brief

Alliance to quit estate agencies

ALLIANCE & Leicester, Britain's fourth biggest building society, is to sell or close its 70 estate agency branches. It has set aside £40 million to cover losses if the whole division, employing 462 people, fails to find a buyer.

The society, due to convert to a publicly listed bank next year, announced a 15 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £286 million in 1995. Losses on bad and doubtful debt were reduced to £3 million from £29 million. Gross mortgage advances were up 12 per cent to £2.9 billion. — *Jill Papworth.*

Juppe's golden share

ALAIN JUPPE, the French premier, said the state will retain majority ownership France Telecom as it prepares for deregulation of the telecoms market. To head off strikes at the telephone monopoly, employees will keep their civil service status after the partial privatisation. EU rules require France to end the monopoly by 1998. Mr Juppe said a new law would guarantee a continued universal public service. — *AP*

Electric inquiry extends

THE Trade Secretary, Ian Lang, extended the Monopolies and Mergers Commission inquiry into proposed bids by PowerGen and National Power for two regional electricity companies, Midlands and Southern, by three weeks. — *Reuters*

Japan's surplus falls

JAPAN'S trade surplus fell last month, suggesting its economy may be growing at last. The total surplus fell by almost 46 per cent to \$4 billion in February, that with the US by 30 per cent to \$3.4 billion. Imports rose by 17 per cent, for the 16th month in a row, to \$27.5 billion, while exports fell by 3.3 per cent to \$34.1 billion, the first monthly fall for three years. — *Kevin Rafferty in Tokyo*

Bunzl warns on growth

BUNZL pushed profits up 33 per cent to £106.2 million in 1995, but said weaker economic growth was likely to hit its markets. Anthony Habgood, chief executive of the paper and plastic packaging group, said paper prices were falling as customers cut stocks. — *Tony May*

Glynwed defies slowdown

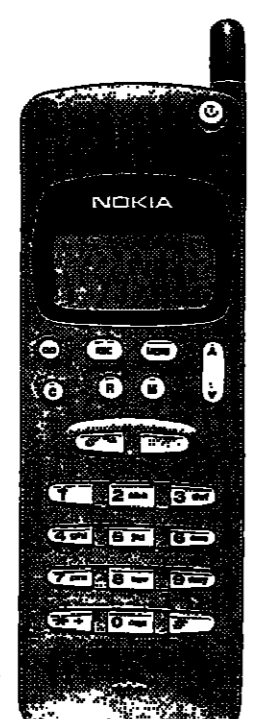
HIGHER exports and new products helped Glynwed International raise 1995 profits by 25 per cent to £84.2 million. Gareth Davies, chairman of the metals and plastic products group, said the result was achieved despite the UK's slower recovery in the second half, and included a four-month contribution from Victaulic, bought in August, of £4.6 million. — *Tony May*

Future Finance

Money Guardian's Future Finance pull-out, missing on Saturday in some parts of the country, will be published in those areas on March 23.

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- ◆ 200 mins talk-time*
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- ◆ Complete with standard battery and rapid travel charger
- ◆ Weight approx 320g

* Cumulative figures when using both batteries

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FREE SPARE BATTERY
FREE LEATHER CASE
TOGETHER WORTH OVER £75

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Money-back promotion for Argos shareholders

lan King

ARGOS, the aggressively-Argos stores firm, yesterday handed its £220 million cash pile back to shareholders. Argos, which has ridden out the recession more easily than most of its high-street rivals, said it was paying a 42p-a-share special dividend.

Announcing a 21 per cent surge in full-year pre-tax profits, to £134.4 million, the chief executive, Mike Smith, said the pay-out would not blunt the company's ability to make acquisitions.

Mr Smith, who refused to discuss a possible bid for the H Samuel and Ernest Jones stores, said that it would be hard to keep up the company's momentum of growth.

Argos is pressing ahead with initiatives including a possible expansion of Call & Collect, its new small-scale store, which allows customers to order products for next-day collection. The concept will take Argos to areas where a larger shop would not be viable, with around 600 such stores envisaged if recent pilots prove successful.

Argos is set to continue expansion in the Republic of Ireland, where it already has three stores, and also plans to open a trial store in Holland.

Among other developments due are a refurbishment of stores, an increase in the number of lines offered to more than 8,100 in 1998, and an extension of the home delivery service.

Tobacco shares slump after Morris accused

Mark Tran in New York

TOBACCO shares took a further pounding yesterday as one of Philip Morris's former leading scientists alleged that the company controlled levels of nicotine in cigarettes in the full knowledge that it was addictive.

The allegations, contained in a 24-page sworn affidavit, came from Ian Uydess, an associate senior scientist who left Philip Morris in 1988 after 11 years because of his growing concern over the health effects of smoking.

Mr Uydess's sworn statement, which was made public yesterday by the federal Food and Drug Administration, alleges that Philip Morris "routinely targeted and adjusted" nicotine levels in cigarettes, based on the "optimum range" preferred by smokers.

He claimed that the company "manipulated" levels of nicotine, first by targeting the amount of nicotine in the tobacco leaf used in cigarettes, and secondly by targeting the amount of "deliverable" nicotine in the smoke.

"Philip Morris routinely investigated the chemical, physical, material and mechanical characteristics of its competitors' products so as to keep itself informed of any changes that might occur in these products," Uydess testified.

Philip Morris, like the rest of the \$45 billion (22 billion) industry, denies any manipulation of nicotine in its products.

In response to the leaked affidavit, Philip Morris said: "The leaking of this document... which gave us less than an hour to initially respond, is typically of the anti-smoking industry's tactics to demonize the industry in the press. Historically, when documents are sensationalised in the press and find their way into the courtroom, juries have failed to find them to be evidence of wrongdoing."

Shares in Philip Morris plunged 6% to \$89 on the news, with other tobacco stocks also suffering.

The allegations echo those of Jeffrey Wigand, former research head at Brown & Williamson, an American subsidiary of BAT Industries.

Mr Uydess's statement came just a week after Liggett, the smallest of the five American tobacco companies, broke the industry's long-standing united front when it announced a tentative settlement of a huge federal class action suit in New Orleans on behalf of every addicted smoker in the United States.

BAT's top lawyer, Stuart Chalfen, met analysts and major shareholders in London yesterday to calm fears that the company might be forced to follow Liggett's lead.

...vintage
...about
...National

Racing

Non-vintage look about the National

NO Grand National can be described as dull, but there is a definite lack of quality about the Martell-sponsored chase at Aintree on Saturday.

top the handicap at Aintree, resulting in a rise in the weights of 9lb, which would be good news for the supporters of Lo Stregone, who has 9st 9lb in the long handicap.



Look for the Eros inside of you... Perry poses in Piccadilly Circus

Old Fridge promises fresh goods

WILLIAM PERRY showed off his new shirt yesterday. It is an XXXL in fetching blue, white and gold, a hot-air balloon with "Fridge 98" on the back.

World League. "I can't wait to start," he said. "I've still got a good three or four years left in me and I wanted to do something different."

and it is possible he is still sprightly enough to figure in the Monarchs' offence. "I'm definitely into carrying the ball," he said.

Rugby League Sydney rebels sue for peace

STAR NAMES among the Murdoch rebels will play in the ARL season when it starts on Friday, in return for being allowed to take part in Super League international events such as the World Cup Championships against British sides, under a compromise apparently being brokered in Sydney by Maurice Lindsay.

Uttoxeter programme

Table of racing results for Uttoxeter, including race numbers, names, and winners.

Ayr card with guide to recent form

Table of racing results for Ayr, including race numbers, names, and winners.

Fontwell runners and riders

Table of racing results for Fontwell, including race numbers, names, and winners.

Results

Table of racing results for various tracks, including race numbers, names, and winners.

Fontwell runners and riders

Table of racing results for Fontwell, including race numbers, names, and winners.

Fontwell runners and riders

Table of racing results for Fontwell, including race numbers, names, and winners.

Fontwell runners and riders

Table of racing results for Fontwell, including race numbers, names, and winners.

Fontwell runners and riders

Table of racing results for Fontwell, including race numbers, names, and winners.

Advertisement for RACELINE featuring a phone number (0891 1684) and a list of racing results.

Soccer

Gascoigne needs twin controls

Patrick Glenn on Terry Venables's message to his wayward midfielder

PAUL GASCOIGNE still needs, at 28, to learn to control himself temperamentally and curb his tendency towards over-exertion if he is to make the greatest contribution for his country in the European Championship finals in June.

Red & yellow

Gascoigne's disciplinary record since joining Rangers (disent): Sept 23 v Hibernian: booked (disent); Sept 30 v Celtic: booked (foul); Oct 21 v Hearts: booked (disent); Oct 24 v Aberdeen: booked (elbows); Nov 8 v Kilmarnock: booked (disent); Nov 19 v Celtic: booked (foul); Dec 30 v Hearts: booked (waving yellow card at ref); Jan 3 v Celtic: booked (foul); Feb 3 v Partick: booked (leaving field to celebrate goal); Feb 10 v Motherwell: booked (gesture after winning penalty); Feb 25 v Aberdeen: booked (disent); Mar 3 v Hibernian: booked (gesture after winning penalty); Mar 17 v Celtic: booked (foul); Champions League: Sept 13 v Steaua Bucharest: booked (foul); Dec 6 v Borussia Dortmund: booked (foul); booked (disent); sent off.

That is the considered verdict of Terry Venables who, while almost certain to name the midfielder tomorrow in his England squad to face Bulgaria next week, was reminded of Gascoigne's flawed talent in the Old Firm derby on Sunday.

On the morning after watching Gascoigne perform patchily for Rangers in the 1-1 draw against Celtic — where the midfielder was noticeably exhausted — Venables said at the end of the game: "England's coach spoke at length in Glasgow of the qualities that make the player an irresistible target for both idolatry and criticism."

"With somebody like him, it really does all come down to control," said Venables. "It's the lack of it in his behaviour that gets him into both with referees and his constant chasing of the ball that tires him out before the end of the match."

"From what I'm told, it seems probable that half of the bookings he's had have been deserved and the others haven't. We can't control what the referee does, but we can control what Gascoigne does. He has to be made aware of that."

"You either go with him or you don't, and he gives you too much to leave him out. That is, unless his behaviour where it becomes damaging. Then you have to make a cold decision on that."



Goal delight... but disciplinary despair has dogged much of Paul Gascoigne's first season back in British football

man signed by Rangers for £1.2 million from Lazio last July has not been sent off in Scotland. His only red card — following two bookings — came in Germany against Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League.

And Gascoigne must learn to pace his game better. "I think his fitness would be OK for 90 minutes if he curbed his instinct to chase the ball," said Venables. "It's back to the control thing. I watched him against Celtic, deep in midfield one moment and then away up front the next. It's a long way back and it takes it out of a player."

"It's like driving a fast car. You can get to a speed where it becomes a little dangerous and you have to drop back down towards the limit for your own safety."

"You also have to remember what he's been through in recent years. The freshness at the start of the season went, because he'd lost too much weight. We saw that in the Umbro Tournament. He scored some goals for Rangers pre-season and then reality set in."

to the confrontation with Scotland in the European Championship, would like this old rivalry to be a regular feature of the British football calendar again.

Uefa Cup quarter-final, second leg: Nottingham Forest v Bayern Munich

Clark prepared for latest war of nerves

Martin Thorpe

ON ONE level the task facing Nottingham Forest tonight sounds temptingly easy: they will see them through to the semi-finals. But Frank Clark goes into the most important match in almost three years as manager at the City Ground knowing that life in Europe is never that simple for Forest.

vious seven foreign ties. And there is the sobering knowledge that Bayern, unlike any of the other sides Forest have met in this competition, are capable of turning the slightest defensive error into a goal. That would leave Forest needing to score twice — something they have managed only once in their attritional campaign.

high degree of balance and discipline we have shown which has most delighted me about us in Europe," says Clark. "But we know that just one slip will be punished."

Stuart Pearce now fully match fit, Clark's only selection problem is the suspension of Scott Gemmill in midfield. But in the Wales international David Phillips has a possible error and experienced replacement.

If Forest went into the first leg with an over-inflated respect for one of the biggest club names in the world, they left Munich feeling that the German league leaders were not brilliant after all.

That is maybe tempting fate but certainly Bayern's mechanistic approach played the passion that will be in ample supply among the Forest team and their fans tonight. "They are the millionaires of German football and sometimes, maybe, they don't fight as hard as they should," said the former Forest player, Tony Woodcock, now coaching in Germany.

Brown firm on Ferguson

Patrick Glenn

DUNCAN FERGUSON, the Everton striker, will be given the chance to resurrect his international career in Scotland's Euro '96 warm-up match against Australia at Hampden Park tomorrow week.

against Australia has yet to be identified, although Brown has consistently touted Aberdeen's Scott Booth. "We are looking for a partnership," said Brown, "and Ferguson will be back alongside whoever we think is appropriate."

Ice Hockey

Wasps first to Wembley

Wic Batsheider

THERE is consolation for Sir John Hall, though Newcastle United are not going to Wembley, the Durham Wasps are.

We'll be going into those looking for the win in both. We want to finish top and hopefully go into the Wembley final with an undefeated record."

Basketball

League stirs strike threat

English players are threatening to strike in response to the Budweiser League's decision to scrap its restrictions on foreign players

ENGLISH players are threatening to strike in response to the Budweiser League's decision to scrap its restrictions on foreign players. The league, concerned that the Bosman ruling would see many of its better players attracted to richer leagues within the European Union, announced yesterday that its two foreigner-per-club rule would be scrapped at the end of the season and that its salary cap would be increased 35 per cent to about £135,000.

Sport in brief

Chess

Luke McShane, the 12-year-old Westminster schoolboy, defeated his second Grandmaster when he outplayed the England international Jonathan Levitt in the UK League sponsored by NatWest Bank at Hertford, writes Leonard Burt.

Results

Football: South Africa 2-0, Section 20 Australia 1-0, Botswana 2-1, England 2-0, France 2-0, Germany 2-0, Greece 2-0, Hungary 2-0, Italy 2-0, Japan 2-0, Korea 2-0, Mexico 2-0, Netherlands 2-0, Norway 2-0, Portugal 2-0, Republic of Ireland 2-0, Scotland 2-0, Slovenia 2-0, Spain 2-0, Sweden 2-0, Switzerland 2-0, Taiwan 2-0, Thailand 2-0, Turkey 2-0, Ukraine 2-0, United States 2-0, Yugoslavia 2-0.

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Fixtures

(7.30 unless stated)

Table with 2 columns: Team, Fixture. Lists football clubs and their upcoming matches.

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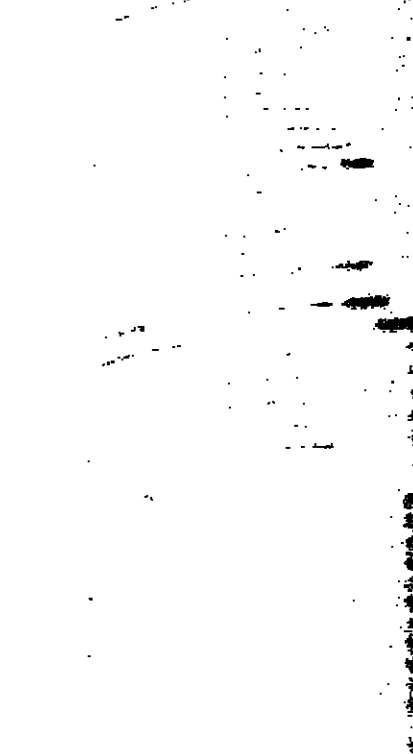
Wright urges Anfield deal

Ian Ross

LIVERPOOL'S refusal to offer their 30-somethings lucrative, long-term contracts may cost them the services of Mark Wright during the summer.

Wright's current contract expires at the end of the season. Unless the defender signs a new deal before the transfer deadline a week on Thursday he will be entitled, as he has reached 32, to leave Anfield in July on a free transfer.

Wright, who is believed to be on the verge of winning an England recall against Bulgaria next week, is seeking a year deal, whereas Liverpool would like to see him agree a 12-month extension.



Wright
urges
Anfield
deal

WORLD CUP CRICKET

Mike Selvey looks back at a tournament that, despite its unwieldy nature, occasionally rose to magnificent heights, and rejoices in the antics of an Arab Sultan and a myopic stumper

A movable run feast spiced with passion

IF THIS World Cup has been the biggest money-making exercise in the history of cricket, then it has exacted a price in return. Much of the cricket has been good, some of it excellent and occasionally sensational. And the final was a dream. But to play the scheduled 37 matches, the 12 teams were forced to spend countless hours criss-crossing the subcontinent, waiting in airports in the hope that for once a flight might leave on time or closed under armed guard in their hotels.

The members of the International Cricket Council have been meeting informally in Lahore this week to discuss this and future tournaments. They are certain to be in agreement that there has to be a rethink to the format, which demanded an interminable round of qualifying matches in order to eliminate four teams. The format was not the responsibility of Pilcom, the joint organising committee, this time round. Rather it was set by ICC agreement and, for what it is worth, an identical format appeared in the pre-

sentation made by the Test and County Cricket Board in 1993 when it was bidding for this tournament. Already the plans are under way in England for the 1999 competitions, with the financial guarantees in place, informal talks with sponsors, and some consideration given to venues. As now, there will be a dozen teams, which will mean three associate members qualifying via the ICC Trophy as happened with Holland, UAE and Kenya. Neither they, nor any other associate members, should be made to feel discouraged (Sri Lanka played in the first two competitions as an associate). If it were possible, there is no reason why future competitions should not be expanded. But all the games have to be meaningful, so avoiding the situation where South Africa, for example, can play regularly professional matches, only to falter when it matters. Some might say that is the nature of competition but it should be about excellence as well. Round-robin scheduling was a riotous mess, happened in Australia and New Zealand last time, were more satisfactory.



On top of the world... Sri Lanka's captain Arjuna Ranatunga has his hands full as he is feted with flowers on arrival at Colombo airport. DEXTER CHIEZ

Highs and lows

Table with columns for Most Runs, Most Wickets, Leading Wicketkeepers, and Highest Individual Scores. Lists player names, runs, wickets, and scores for various matches.

But the counterpoint was seen in Calcutta last Wednesday when there was a riotous reaction to India's defeat. The other day, in Lahore, a group of journalists were approached by an elderly man, who embarked on an unrelenting anti-Indian tirade. "They do not know the concept of losing." "Can you then explain," he was asked, "why your own national captain has not yet been able to return to his house for fear of the stones and rotten eggs?" When these people share that much antipathy, there is little hope that sport can transcend it. Neither country has emerged from this tournament with credit.

It has been five weeks of domination by batsmen who have taken advantage of the slow, true surfaces to crack through the line untroubled by movement. It speaks volumes when a pace bowler of the quality of Allan Donald is omitted from the South African side because he is too expensive in conditions where dribbly medium pace can thrive. Against that the rise of the spin bowler has continued, with Waugh and Kumble, Adams and Symcox, Jayasuriya and Muralitharan, Harveer and Mushtaq all having their moments. Of the true pace

bowlers Rhodes, and some sensational catching. There have been great moments, too, such as that when Steve Waugh, in the semi-final, summoned up the delivery of the tournament to slide past Lara's outside edge and peg back his off stump. Personally, however, the two choicest moments were provided by the so-called minnows in South Africa's opening match in Rawalpindi. The United Arab Emirates captain Sultan Zarawani, the man with more yellow Lamborghinis than brains apparently, walked in to bat against Donald wearing not a helmet but a broad-brimmed sun hat. For a class player it would be risky, for a ferret (one who goes in for the rabbits) it was potty. Donald's first ball hit him square between the eyes, which then appeared to be his head independently. He carried on, though. "He's Arab," said a teammate.

But has there been a sporting moment anywhere recently to rival the catch taken by the Kenyan Tariq Iqbal, a tubby, myopic stumper with a headband and bushy beard, to dismiss Lara. For an embarrassing half an hour he had failed to lay a glove on the ball. Suddenly Lara's edged catch lodged itself in his groin and, after moments fumbling, he emerged triumphant with the ball. That catch arguably put the seal on the greatest upset in World Cup history. Wes Hall, the West Indies manager, has criticised his Board of Control for announcing during the World Cup that he and the coach Andy Roberts were to be replaced. "Throughout the subcontinent, and indeed in Australia and in England, the word had gone out that the entire management team had been sacked," said Hall. "I would think the timing of the changes was deplorable."

ICC considers format change. THE International Cricket Council is considering a proposal to drop the quarter- and semi-finals in favour of a round-robin second stage to decide the two finalists at the 1999 World Cup in England. Although the format is likely to be different, the ICC chairman Clyde Walcott said yesterday that the number of teams competing would remain the same, with the nine Test-playing nations being joined by three associate members via the ICC Trophy. No decision will be taken until the ICC's July meeting in London. "We have appointed a committee with representatives from the ICC and member countries to make recommendations," Walcott said.

Rugby End of 100 years' war as Wigan lunch at RFU

Robert Armstrong. CENTURY of disharmony between the two rugby codes was swept away at a stroke when Wigan came to Twickenham as guests of Bath and the Rugby Football Union yesterday. Joe Lyon, Wigan's coach, led a delegation of players and officials which was greeted by the RFU secretary Tony Hallett and then entertained to lunch along with Bath's Jon Hall and Phil de Glanville. "This is truly an historic occasion," a woman in a women's 180-day residential rule which it believed the move would contravene. Quins have said they are ready to issue writs against the WRU and the IRB. Damien Hopley of Wasps will captain England in the Hong Kong Sevens starting on March 23. The squad will be named on Sunday.

were knocked out of the Challenge Cup by Salford - which means they are even more interested in our game at Twickenham," said Lyon. "We won't try to take Bath on at their own game - we'll be looking to play union in a rugby league style. It's a wonderful chance for us to learn something about the other game of rugby." Wigan's commercial director David Bradshaw rejected the suggestion that the games were a commercial stunt, pointing out that both clubs had been inundated with inquiries about tickets from all over the United Kingdom. "Since we first began discussing the fixtures five months ago it has become obvious that they'll have a commercial significance and everybody will come out of this a winner," said Bradshaw. Wigan, who have spent £2,500 on a scrummaging machine, are being coached in

the skills of union by Orrell, whom they recently held to a draw in a practice match. Offiah, who played at Twickenham in the Middlesex Sevens with Rosslyn Park nine years ago, said: "I don't think Wigan can win the union game but we'll give it our best try to avoid being embarrassed." The Welsh Rugby Union has admitted it may not be able to stop the Neath lock Gareth Llewellyn from transferring to Harlequins if the case goes to court. The WRU regulatory and trusts committee made a ruling on the basis of the IRB's 180-day residential rule which it believed the move would contravene. Quins have said they are ready to issue writs against the WRU and the IRB. Damien Hopley of Wasps will captain England in the Hong Kong Sevens starting on March 23. The squad will be named on Sunday.



Code-breakers... Tuigamala and De Glanville check one another out at Twickenham yesterday. FRANK BARKON

Boxing Botha says Tyson is like RoboCop

FEW men would dare to refer to Mike Tyson as RoboCop but the prospect of earning a lot of money for a few painful minutes in the ring with the World Boxing Council heavyweight champion scrambled the brains of the International Boxing Federation title-holder Frans Botha in Las Vegas yesterday, writes Don Best. Tyson's expression did not change when the lumbering South African started to talk a good unification fight. Bruno, meanwhile, arrives in Britain ready, like many an MP, to spend more time with his family. After that, he said, he would be in a better position to say what comes next.

Botha will come into a complicated picture - it also features Lennox Lewis and Riddick Bowe - if he beats Michael Moorer in a fight ordered by the IBF. Botha, who tested positive for steroids after his title victory over the German Axel Schulz in December, declared: "Tyson is strong and powerful but I have no skill. He's like RoboCop. I'm going to beat him to death with style. I'm the white Muhammad Ali." That he is not. Bruno, meanwhile, arrives in Britain ready, like many an MP, to spend more time with his family. After that, he said, he would be in a better position to say what comes next.

Golf Goydos gains first and qualifies for Masters

FIVE months ago the life and golf career of Paul Goydos was in crisis. He knew he had to make more than \$33,000 (\$22,000) in the last two events of 1995 to retain his US Tour card and avoid having to go back to a place they all dread - the qualifying school. For a golfer who was averaging no more than \$3,400 per tournament up to this point, it was an extremely tall order. On Sunday, though, Goydos reflected on those moments in the aftermath of winning the Bay Hill Invitational, plus \$26,000 and a place in the US Masters at Augusta in a month's time. "I knew I had to make the money," he said. "It was that or go back to the Q-school, or perhaps having to go back to the Nike tour, or even having to go back to teaching maths in school."

That was sufficient to win by one from Jeff Maggert who, at the time when Goydos was worrying himself silly last year, was relaxing after reaching one of the game's peaks, playing in the Ryder Cup. "Three 67s," said Goydos, "that's pretty impressive. Three rounds without a bogey, that's tremendous round that. Hopefully I'll remember what caused it." Five years ago Goydos, 31, could not have contemplated doing what he did on Sunday. He was struggling so much with his game that he spent most of his time as a supply teacher, earning \$105 a day. "That's not bad money," he said on Sunday. "Better than you get for selling tees and shoes in a pro shop. I'd go to work at 8.30, stop at 3pm and I'd have from 3pm to dark to work on my game." Goydos played with the benefit of the fates on Sunday. An errant tee shot at the short 2nd got a freak bounce and finished inches from the hole and he holed from off the green at the 5th.

At the 8th another 25-footer crashed dead centre into the hole when it might have gone 10 feet past had it missed. "It's kinda a silly game isn't it?" said Goydos. "At the 11th I missed a five-footer and at the 12th I holed a 25-footer. What can you make of that?" It was, though, a par at the 15th that was one of the most important facets of his win. "I hit a horrible drive and an abysmal second into a trap and came out to 15 feet. When that par putt went in it allowed me to play the H-20 holes conservatively." The 15th, 17th and 18th all feature carries over water and, although at this stage Goydos had a three-stroke lead, he knew that it could go at one of those holes. As it was, he was able to play for the fat of the green, put together three pars and win. It had been hard but not that hard. "I'll say this," he said. "Trying to keep fifth graders [10- to 11-year-olds] sitting down - now that's the hardest work I've ever done." Bernhard Langer, with a closing 66, was the leading European on 281 for a share of 13th place. He won \$18,174. Nick Faldo finished with a 73, for 322, a share of 24th place and \$10,550.

Two out of three for Neumann

SWEDEN'S Liselotte Neumann won her second LPGA title in three events when she took the Ping-Welch Championship in Tucson with a fourth-round 68, four under par, for a total of 276. She beat the American Cathy Johnston-Forbes by one stroke but both women could thank the overnight leader Daruile Ammaccapane, who threw away her

chance when she went from 12 under to seven under in the space of four outward holes. Neumann's seventh LPGA victory earned her \$67,500 (\$42,000). Meanwhile the European Women's Tour has announced a new tournament, the European Open, to be played at Hanbury Manor in Hertfordshire on September 5-8 with a prize fund of £100,000.

Hockey Holiday hits Reading hopes

READING, the only club that can achieve a cup and league double in the season, will face a tough test in their final league match of the season without their prolific scorer Paddy Osborn, who will be on holiday. Osborn had planned the holiday for after Reading's final league match, which should have been on Sunday, but England arranged to play India at Milton Keynes that day and the First Division games were put back a week. Osborn will be back in time for Reading's FA Cup semi-final against Teddington, the 1995 National League champions, who are endeavouring to reach a fifth successive final.

Old Loughtonians, who like Reading have yet to win the cup but are seeking an indoor-outdoor cup double, meet the 1994 champions East Grinstead in the other semi-final. The matches are scheduled for April 23 in Milton Keynes but the semi-finalists are hoping the final will be played on that date rather than May 12, when the Great Britain players will be in Malaysia. MA CUP SEMI-FINALS: Old Loughtonians v East Grinstead, Teddington v Reading. Matches at Milton Keynes, April 28. SCOTTISH CUP SEMI-FINALS: Western v Moncreiff or URM, Grange v Torrance. Matches April 14. GIRLS' LEAGUE PLAY-OFFS: Grange A (Inverch, Warrington, Lowest plus National League club, Grange B, Westons, Macc, Harrogate, Colton, Hockley plus National League club. Matches April 25-14. FA TROPHY SEMI-FINALS: Norwich City v Coventry City, West Ham v York. Trophies Matches, March 31.

Stars desert the Grand National field, page 13
Venables and the Gascoigne factor, page 15

Final verdict on cricket's world cup, page 15
Twickenham welcomes the old enemy, page 15

SportsGuardian

NEWCASTLE GO TOP AGAIN WITH GOAL-DIFFERENCE BONUS



Heading back to the top... Philippe Albert slips the ball into the net at the end of a fine move for Newcastle United's first goal at St James' Park last night PHOTOGRAPH: RAOULO DODON

Premiership: Newcastle United 3, West Ham United 0

Asprilla makes his points

Ian Ross

NEWCASTLE emphatically converted one of the two games they had in hand on Manchester United to regain the leadership in the title race. There were goals of real quality by Albert, Asprilla and Ferdinand — the latter two scoring in a second half they dominated against 10-man opposition — to ensure that Kevin Keegan's men also returned the top with a better goal difference than their red rivals.

There has never really been a bad time to come up against West Ham, irrespective of manager, irrespective of personnel. They play a certain pre-ordained way: sometimes it is enough to keep them where they are, sometimes it merely hastens them down the road to change of scenery. It would be tempting fate to suggest that things are different now but certainly expectations are more soundly based at Upton Park of late.

Usually by mid-March the Hammers' fans are looking over their shoulders. Last night the handful permitted access to Newcastle's gleaming citadel were looking forward to their team having it,

not a major say, then a discreetly whispered word in what is a compelling Premiership race. West Ham's team sheet was a tonic to read. With Lukic Miklosko announced as an injury even as the club bus cut through the fog that shrouded the Tyne, the 35-year-old Les Sealey was pressed into service. Even so, Sealey was a spring chicken alongside his touch-line deputy for the evening, the 46-year-old Peter Shilton. Rumours that football is a young man's game can safely be discounted.

West Ham began the first half as they were to finish it, under pressure and strung out along the perimeter of their penalty area like so many fence posts. Just as against Manchester United a fortnight earlier, Newcastle's menace was pronounced very early on.

Newcastle soon found that some quite delightful football had no reward — hardly a novelty these days — as three times in the opening 15 minutes they pushed West Ham to the very lip of the precipice only to see the visitors step snarling backwards. The man with his finger in the dyke was, of course, Sealey, for nights such as these are made for men such as him. For 20 minutes he stopped everything, denying Ferdinand, Ginola and Lee with the casual air of a club player performing on the local rec.

Nothing lasts for ever, though, and in the 21st minute, at a point when their patience and that of their supporters was under some strain, Newcastle broke through. Having taken delivery of Ferdinand's pass some 20 yards from goal, Asprilla rolled it forwards, so dissecting West Ham's defence and pushing the ball directly into the path of Philippe Albert.

Albert is a most proficient finisher and his shot was low and true. For once Sealey had no answer. Gately, commendably, West Ham tried to pretend their spirit was unbroken. The outlook was already bleak but the picture was to darken still more in the 31st minute when, perhaps 30 seconds after he had been cautioned for hauling down a Ginola, Steve Potts thundered in the Frenchman from behind, lifting him off the turf.

Newcastle always seemed likely to exploit their numerical advantage but on a surface made treacherous by incessant rain, their football was rather less precise than it had been in the first period.

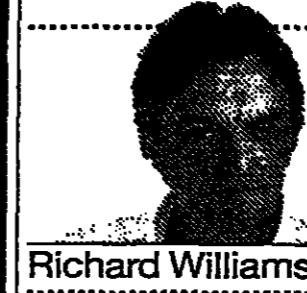
As West Ham reluctantly began to turn their attentions to damage limitation — prudent under the circumstances — Newcastle punched holes in a depleted, tiring defence. Ferdinand squandered a fine opportunity on 48 minutes but seven minutes later Newcastle were home and dry. Beardley was the architect, slotting forward a pass which Asprilla carried on before driving a shot up and over the advancing Sealey.

The floodgates were ajar and after 65 minutes Ferdinand casually knocked in a third after Ginola's corner had been helped on, firstly by Howey and then by Asprilla.

Newcastle United: Bracewell, Barton (Watson, 56min), Howey, Albert, Ferdinand, Asprilla. West Ham: Sealey, Lee, Baily, Ginola, Ferdinand, Asprilla.

Everybody had an opinion on this one. Among Abdul-Rauf's critics was a far more celebrated Muslim basketball

Standing up for rights and anthems



Richard Williams

MAHMOUD ABDUL-RAUF is standing when they play the Star-Spangled Banner before games these days but, although his lips are moving, he is not joining in the words. He is praying.

Last week Abdul-Rauf, a 52-million-a-year guard with the Denver Nuggets, was briefly suspended by the National Basketball Association for refusing to stand alongside his team-mates during the traditional pre-game playing of the anthem. The ensuing row provoked a debate about the propriety of playing patriotic songs at sports events, and whether athletes should be obliged to participate in such ceremonies.

In fact Abdul-Rauf had been ignoring the anthem since the beginning of the season, several months and more than 60 games ago. He either stayed in the locker room or sat on the bench while his colleagues obeyed the NBA's requirement that all players and team officials should "stand and line up in a dignified posture along the sidelines or the foul-line during the playing of the National Anthem".

player, Houston's Hakeem Olajuwon, who accused him of misinterpreting the Koran. "In general the Muslim teaching is to obey and respect," said the man who led the Rockets to the championship in the past two seasons. "To be a good Muslim is to be a good citizen." But A. C. Green of the Phoenix Suns, a devout Christian, had a different view: "I hope he sticks with his conviction. This game is nothing but a job. This is not life. You have to have convictions and principles in life."

EVENTUALLY the NBA and Abdul-Rauf reached a compromise. The player will line up with his colleagues but he will not be thinking the same thoughts. "I stand," he explained, "but I'll offer a prayer, my own prayer, for those who are suffering — Muslim, Caucasian, African-American, Asian or whoever is in that position, whoever is experiencing difficulty."

I thought about this as I heard the 3,000 British fans of Frank Bruno jeer the Star-Spangled Banner before the fight in Las Vegas on Saturday night. The Americans weren't used to such treatment. The playing of their anthem before big events — Super Bowl, the Ryder Cup, the Ryder Cup — is part of the pageantry. Gradually they responded on Saturday night by joining in and effectively drowning the British boos, surely lending moral strength to the fighter.

It's my experience that young countries are most proud of their flags and their anthems. To take an extreme example: when the European football championship begins, we shall see Croatia use the opportunity to establish its nationhood in the eyes of the world. The great age of our own nation means that we have grown out of the simple acceptance of national pride: our response is more complex, more ambiguous, which is in some ways healthy but seems poisoned when we turn it into an insult against the sensibilities of another nation.

Neville brothers ready to match the Charltons

Cynthia Bateman

PHILIP NEVILLE, the Manchester United full-back, is expected to join his older brother Gary in the England squad for the game against Bulgaria next week. If the Nevilles make it to the pitch they will join Bobby and Jack Charlton as the only brothers to play together in an officially recognised England game this century.

Denis and Leslie Compton, the Middlesex cricketers, were in the England soccer side together four times during the war, but war-time games were not recognised for caps. Both were at Arsenal. Leslie won two caps in 1951. The Charltons played 28 internationals together between 1965 and 1970, including the 1966 World Cup win. Bobby won 106 caps, two fewer than Bobby Moore's 108, both later surpassed by Peter Shilton's 125, while Jack, lately the

Republic of Ireland manager, won 35. "I would think there is a big possibility of Phil Neville playing alongside his brother Gary," said Sir Bobby yesterday. They are both good competitors and very good players. Jack and I were proud to play for England together and I know these kids would be equally proud. Gary Neville, 21, has six England caps winning the first against Japan last summer after only 17 full games in the Premiership. Philip, only just turned 19, has made 16 full league appearances and has recently come into his own, filling the left-back spot when Denis Irwin was forced to move to the right because of injuries to David May and Paul Parker and when his brother moved to the centre. The left-back position has become a problem for the England manager Terry Venables, with Graeme Le Saux injured and Stuart Pearce just recovering from an injury.

The lonely hearts columns are full of what Wilfred Owen called the "eternal reciprocity of tears". It is the self-descriptions that give away people's perpetually mistaken idea of what interests or attracts the opposite sex. Sebastian Faulks

Guardian Crossword No 20,604

Set by Gordius

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32

- Across**
- 1 Balance story about offspring (7)
 - 5 Model priest becomes course counsellor (7)
 - 9 Bill for Windows (5)
 - 10 Kind of sentence coppers have to face? (5)
 - 11 Shells to be found at the edge of secondary highway? (5)
 - 12 Opponent fails to finish — a washout (5)
 - 13 The Queen's about to have the anaesthetic (5)
 - 15 Stress speed is as variable between the same points (9)
 - 18 Trifling with marriage on the first day (5)
 - 19 Bird with head covered (5)
 - 21 Do they sound a false note? (5)
 - 23 One fought mad dog with larist (9)
- Down**
- 1 Member finds Scripture mostly readable (7)
 - 2 Harbottle's reckless commitment (9)
 - 3 Arab leader portrayed as disheartened (5)
 - 4 Cryptic clue one academic used to describe space (9)
 - 5 Preference for early Slaley seen in collection (5)
 - 6 E-mail Copt received from Egyptian ruler (9)
 - 7 Tired ceremonial at theatre opening (5)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,604

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32

- 8 Concerning the conveyance, it's free (7)
 - 14 Refined res. rebuil — with New premium (9)
 - 16 Respicuous state includes Socialist and Conservative (9)
 - 17 Statement and description of NHS customer? (9)
 - 18 Raising one's hat to a lady may reveal horns (7)
 - 20 Writer ran up article with any odd material (7)
 - 22 Eastern lung only not very open raised little hope (5)
 - 23 Despite big losses company 'shares retain lustre' (5)
 - 24 2-digit number, Greek style (5)
- Solution tomorrow**
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